

# INTRODUCTION TO GREEN'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

*by*

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## P R E F A C E

The main purpose of this volume, which deals with the whole of the *Prolegomena*<sup>1</sup> and with the *Prolegomena* alone, is to present a systematic account of Green's moral philosophy. Discounting this Preface, a few footnotes and the critical notes forming the Appendix, the work is entirely expository.

A book of this character will naturally enough appeal to but a small public, and its issue requires some explanation. It is intended for the use of undergraduates in those Colleges where the *Prolegomena* is included amongst the prescribed texts for Intermediate and Honours classes in philosophy. It should be added that some acquaintance with Green's predecessors, particularly Kant, is presupposed. There is already a fairly extensive literature on Green's philosophy, but the account of his system by Fairbrother is the only book I have seen which aims at the kind of exposition I have had in mind; and even Fairbrother's volume, including within its relatively small compass more than the *Prolegomena*, offers a less intensive study of that work than one could have wished.

As a text-book the *Prolegomena* has several disadvantages. To follow Green's thought demands considerable effort under even the most favourable conditions. There is a sustained concentration in his reasoning, and similar concentration is demanded of the reader who would understand him. This of course is to be expected in the case of every great philosopher; but in addition to this natural and unavoidable difficulty in making sense of Green's moral philosophy, the

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena to Ethics*, by T. H. Green.

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reader is handicapped by the technical defects of the *Prolegomena* itself. It is badly arranged. The development of its positive doctrines moves slowly and ponderously with much unnecessary repetition, and is too often interrupted by lengthy criticisms of opposing moral theories. Some of these technical faults would undoubtedly have been removed had Green not died while the book was still in preparation for the press. Under the careful editorship of Dr. A. C. Bradley, indeed, some improvements on the MS. were actually carried out where it was clear that Green had intended to revise. But with all an editor could legitimately do, the arrangement still leaves much to be desired.

To meet a somewhat similar situation in the case of Locke's *Essay*, an abridged edition of the *Essay* has been issued; but those who are familiar with the *Prolegomena* will, I think, agree that it would not readily lend itself to such treatment. Taking a general view of the main requirements of students, I have felt that the best aid to the study of Green would be an independent exposition. In endeavouring to perform this task my method of working was, first, to prepare a summary of the whole book, paragraph by paragraph; secondly, to arrange the paragraphs in what seemed to me the most systematic order; and finally, to work out on the basis of this re-arranged summary something of the nature of an interpretative paraphrase of Green's doctrines. I have allowed myself considerable freedom of presentation, often compressing lengthy arguments which seemed fairly straightforward, and expanding those the point of which appeared less obvious. Sometimes I have made explicit what I believed to be implicit in Green, and occasionally I have ventured—as, e.g., in Chapter VI, on the

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meaning of "good" and "moral good"—to introduce new material in order to set Green's doctrines in a wider context. While it is to be hoped that this method has not resulted in any gross misrepresentations of the author, it certainly has its dangers, and my marginal references to the paragraphs of the *Prolegomena* may be useful as providing at least some rough check upon my exposition.

So much in explanation of the character and purpose of the present volume; and until comparatively recently such explanations are probably all that would have been expected. Today, however, when Green's merits are apt to receive less recognition than they deserve, it may be felt that some apology is due for encouraging any tendency to retain the *Prolegomena* as a University text-book. From the criticisms contained in the Appendix it will be obvious that I am not altogether in sympathy with his metaphysics or with his ethical theory. I believe that from many points of view he is open to criticism, and that the defects in his moral philosophy are due not merely to the influence of certain questionable doctrines in his metaphysics, but also to his misreading of some aspects of ordinary moral experience.

But I do not know of any book which could quite fill the place which the *Prolegomena* at present occupies.

From the historical point of view it is undoubtedly the greatest treatise on moral philosophy produced by the British school of Idealism.

Whatever may be said of its metaphysics, it certainly stands as a perpetual reminder of the fact that one's moral theory can never be severed ultimately from one's conception of the metaphysical status and destiny of humanity.

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While one cannot feel convinced that Green always read correctly the facts of moral experience, there are few writings on ethics which compare with the *Prolegomena* for breadth and profundity of moral insight. Green does not, as has been suggested, confuse the office of the moral philosopher with that of the preacher. No one has been more fully aware<sup>1</sup> that the business of the philosopher is not to create—not even to advocate—moral ideals, but simply to understand them, analysing their nature and demonstrating their implications. But, on the other hand, no one has been more fully aware that what the philosopher has to analyse and understand are the facts and operative ideals incarnate in men and societies. It is characteristic of such studies as ethics that a large percentage of the data to be explained must be derived from personal introspection; and it is only to be expected that Green's own character should be largely revealed in what he took to be the main features of man's moral nature. If, in this attempt to explain the principal phenomena of the moral consciousness, he has also revealed his own attitude on certain issues of practical import, it should certainly be regarded as an advantage that students of the subject have here the character of a great citizen occasionally falling under the keen scrutiny of a great philosopher.

That Green was a great philosopher will be admitted by all who have devoted much time to the study of his work. Sidgwick, his most eminent, and perhaps most unsparing critic, pays special tribute to its close and powerful reasoning; and indeed the respect was mutual. That Green and Sidgwick did not see eye to eye in matters philosophical is more generally

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX.

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known than that there was a long-standing friendship between the two men; and it is curious that, leading two very different schools of thought, they should share the common fate of receiving much less than justice at the hands of some contemporary writers. Dr. C. D. Broad,<sup>1</sup> for instance, has recently spoken of Green as a "thoroughly second-rate thinker"; and, as for Sidgwick (according to the same writer), Green "has probably made far more undergraduates into prigs than Sidgwick will ever make into philosophers."

No worthy follower of Green would so under-rate Sidgwick's influence; and I am sure that, of Sidgwick's many distinguished disciples, past and present, not one would endorse Dr. Broad's estimate of Green.

One of the most admirable qualities of Green's and of Sidgwick's work—a quality which gives it a permanent disciplinary value for students of philosophy even on the supposition that their positive doctrines are all untenable or out of date—is that they never attempted to make dubious wit serve for wisdom. In the paragraph which contains the above-quoted reflections, Broad makes the very interesting comment on Sidgwick that "he seldom allowed the strong sense of humour, which is said to have made him a delightful conversationalist, to relieve the uniform dull dignity of his writing." In this point, at any rate, Green and Sidgwick seem to have been kindred spirits. They wrote, as Sidgwick says of Green, "not for victory," but in a "candid, earnest, careful, exhaustive style of controversy." Sidgwick's self-restraint was, I should imagine, quite conscious and deliberate; for he probably realized, as Green certainly did, how easily the desire to be clever or to score off an opponent

<sup>1</sup> *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 144.

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may distract the philosopher's attention from his proper task. In Green's view, philosophy is not a hobby to be pursued by privileged individuals, but a vocation the proper following of which constitutes a contribution to the common good—the standards of conscientiousness and singleness of mind which we apply to the craftsman, governor and tradesman, applying equally to the philosopher. Green's sense of his obligations as a citizen had, consequently, a profound effect upon his methods of thinking and writing; for, as he himself says,<sup>1</sup> "The effect of 'moral' interests appears in habits without which the scholar or artist is not properly free for his work, nor exempt from the temptation to be showy instead of thorough in it." Nowhere, perhaps, do these "moral interests" appear more clearly in Green than in their effect upon his criticism of Utilitarianism. In that sustained polemic against a position which he believed to be theoretically wrong and practically pernicious, there is nothing offensive or small-minded, whatever there may be of confusion or misunderstanding.

Passing from these general subjects, a word should be said to guide the reader in understanding how the arrangement of topics in this book differs from that in the *Prolegomena* itself. Instead of the ordinary Index, I have provided an Analytical Table of Contents, and an Index to Paragraph References. The latter may profitably be used in connection with the Analytical Table printed at the beginning of the *Prolegomena*. To supply such an Index is perhaps a little tactless, for it will emphasize defects in my book which might otherwise not shout too loudly. But if the reader will remember that this is a condensed exposition and not

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 148.

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a Commentary on the *Prolegomena* he will not expect to find each paragraph dealt with individually (much less discussed in detail). The Index will be useful chiefly to indicate the context in which the general subject of any particular paragraph is expounded.

My indebtedness to others for help in the study of Green is so great that adequate acknowledgement is impossible. I shall mention only those directly associated with the production of this book. In the first place I wish to thank Dr. C. C. J. Webb, late Oriel Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford, and Professor C. A. Campbell of Bangor, for having read and sent criticisms of the first draft of my MS. Those who know Dr. Webb and Professor Campbell will understand how generously they give of their time and thought to such work. Extensive alterations have been made as a result of their criticisms, though in the Appendix the 'mark of the Beast' is still more evident than they could have wished.

In the final revision of my work I have had the valuable assistance of Mr. George Brown, Lecturer in Logic and Metaphysics at Glasgow University.

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To Mr. I. W. Phillips, Lecturer in Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, who has kindly read the whole of my proofs, and to my wife who has assisted me in the collation of MS. and proofs, I am very grateful for their help in the removal of obscurities and other defects of style.

# GREEN'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

## PART I

### THE PSYCHOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS OF MORALS



## INTRODUCTION

The attitude of educated men to the subject of moral 1  
philosophy is profoundly affected by the type of metaphysics which dominates their outlook; and in an age noted for its achievements in the realm of natural science, the methods and presuppositions of science are generally carried into the field of metaphysics, giving rise to Naturalism or Materialism as the typical philosophy of the day. At such times the study of moral ideas comes to be conceived as a branch of anthropology, a small province of natural science in general. From this point of view, any 'moral philosophy' which is not entirely or mainly concerned with such things as 'instincts,' 'environmental stimuli' and 'nervous and muscular reactions'—any moral philosophy which assumes human behaviour to manifest something more than a late stage in the evolution of that interesting machinery we call animal life—is simply a belated chapter in the story of superstitions.

While the Naturalistic metaphysics which directs 2  
such strictures upon the older and more ambitious idea of moral philosophy is, as will be shown in the sequel, itself a product of confused thinking, it must be admitted that there is a strong temptation to treat ethics as a branch of natural science. To some extent we can predict human actions as we predict the course of natural events. We can make fairly accurate forecasts of our fellows' behaviour for ordinary practical purposes; and scientific knowledge and prediction do not differ in principle from commonsense knowledge and prediction. To bring out the identity of principle, let us consider our knowledge of 'cause and

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effect' in the natural order. When a child's ball rolls under a chair, he learns by observation and experiment how to retrieve it. He learns what 'cause' will bring about the desired 'effect.' The old salt, from long experience and 'putting two and two together,' becomes a moderately reliable weather prophet. In both of these cases the lay intelligence predicts, more or less successfully, the consequences of a given action or set of conditions; and it is by more careful, intensive and systematic observation and by the more careful putting of two and two together that 'scientific' knowledge results. The difference between the lay and the scientific intelligence is not a difference of kind, but only one of degree.

Turning to consider our knowledge of human character, it is plain that, by observing men's behaviour and by putting two and two together, we do believe that by confronting them with certain situations we shall get them to act in certain ways. The child can predict his mother's behaviour to the extent of knowing that, if he cries hard enough and gets her to believe he is unwell, she will allow him to stay away from school; and he can predict his master's behaviour sufficiently to desire to absent himself, his state of preparation being what it is. Such predictions the lay intelligence is capable of making with regard to human behaviour; and it seems reasonable to suppose that more careful and systematic observation of human conduct would result in a body of 'scientifically demonstrable laws' to which the actions of all human beings conform. Indeed, economic, political and educational theory, abounding as they do with general propositions about 'the human being as such,' would seem to afford a practical proof that human behaviour

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is amenable to the same scientific understanding as is the rest of the natural order.

From considerations such as these the Naturalist concludes that, once we are freed from ancient theological prepossessions, we can find no question worth asking which really falls outside the sphere of science.

If it be said that the 'scientific moralist' will find some difficulty in fitting 'free will' and our possession of a 'moral sense' into his system, he replies that the latter can easily be explained and the former easily proved non-existent. 3-6

The 'moral sentiment' being explained in terms of susceptibility to pleasure and sympathy, the doctrine of 'free will' is not likely to give much trouble. The usual defence of free will takes the form of arguing that free will is a 'faculty' which 'freely chooses' without any 'determination by motives.' Even ordinary commonsense feels that such a doctrine is out of accord with all significant practical activity. If a man is asked to choose between death and 'recantation,' he is (we believe) free to choose the one or the other. But whichever he chooses or wills to accept, motives determine his choice. Whether the anticipation of freedom from bodily pain and prolonged life, or the anticipation of some good to be achieved for his fellow-men affects him most, his choice is certainly determined by a consideration of the probable effects to be produced by his action.

Reflection comes to strengthen commonsense in scouting the doctrine of motiveless choice. The will has been spoken of as a 'faculty.' But a 'faculty' is simply a 'possibility.' The billiard-ball has a faculty of rolling—i.e. it is *possible* for the billiard-ball to roll. But its rolling is determined by conditions, by influences

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brought to bear upon it. Similarly, it is possible for a man to do that which he does. He has the 'faculty' of doing that thing. But the act he performs is determined by a complex of conditions over which (the Naturalist avers) he has no control. And to include the 'faculty of acting' (or 'will') amongst those conditions is—like including the 'faculty of rolling' amongst the conditions determining the billiard-ball's motion—simply a confession of ignorance, or an attempt to cover it by offering as an explanation of an event a mere reassertion of the event to be explained.

- 7 Thus with the rejection of the belief in an innate conscience—a fabulous priest after the order of Melchisedec—and in the freedom of the will, we are apparently ready to begin a study of the moral consciousness upon approved scientific principles.

There is one further point, however, which demands notice before we can feel quite easy in the Naturalistic point of view. The moralist is generally expected to explain not only how men in fact *do* behave but also how they *ought*<sup>1</sup> to behave. And the 'Scientific Moralists'

<sup>1</sup> Exception may perhaps be taken to Green's assertion that the moralist is concerned to explain how men ought to behave. The moral philosopher's work is primarily to reflect upon and understand practical life rather than to direct it. He is expected to analyse ordinary moral judgments, drawing out their implications, bringing to reflective consciousness the criteria according to which men (perhaps not very clearly conscious of those criteria) draw the distinction between right and wrong, pointing out oppositions and contradictions where such exist. It is true that for himself, and also for those who accept his analysis of the moral consciousness, the philosopher's reflective study of morality is bound to have its effect on practical ways of living; and moral philosophy may very truly be said to derive its value ultimately from the fact that it has a practical bearing. But, immediately and 'as such,' the moralist is not concerned to create and inculcate ideals but to analyse and throw into a clear light those already

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do indeed actually propound rules of living, placing before us 'oughts' and 'ought not's.' Yet it seems obvious that, to a being who is simply the result of natural forces, injunctions and exhortations to that course of action which those forces necessarily determine him to pursue seem altogether unmeaning. If I am determined to act in a particular way by laws which I *cannot* break, what significance is there in saying I 'ought' to do so-and-so? To say I ought surely implies the possibility of my doing something different. Hence, to say that I ought to conform to the natural laws determining my conduct is meaningless, for, *ex hypothesi*, it is impossible for me not to conform to them. And again, to say that I ought to do or ought to have done that which I shall not do or have not done is senseless, for, *ex hypothesi*, natural laws determine everything I do; my action is the 'necessary result' of a given set of conditions, and therefore it is impossible that I should do other than what I actually do. The scientific moralist, to be consistent, then, will be obliged to abandon the attitude of mind ordinarily associated with the formulation of promises and precepts. He will not, indeed, be obliged to deny that precepts and commands affect our conduct, for they obviously do

entertained by the moral consciousness. This conception of the function of ethics seems to differ fundamentally from Green's; but such is not the case. His real view is not represented by the sentence in the text which has called forth this note, but, as will be apparent from Chapter IX, is substantially identical with the view suggested in this note itself. And indeed, as we follow the argument Green is at present developing, we see that it hangs not upon the assumption that the moralist is a preacher of practical ideals, but upon the fact that the moral consciousness itself (which it is the moralist's business to analyse and understand) cannot avoid making use of the distinction between what we do or have done, and what we ought to do or ought to have done.

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affect it. They are elements in that complex of conditions which determine us to act; and the preceptor can no more help telling us what we 'ought' to have done but did not do, than we can help doing what we 'ought not.' To say 'I ought' or 'You ought' would thus be important only as setting a 'circumstance' for some future action. It would not really be a judgment on the past action, implying that that action need not have taken place. The assertion 'You ought' would simply be an atmospheric disturbance causing a sensory stimulus and therefore becoming part of the complex of conditions determining future action.

But the ordinary use of language gives a very different connotation to the term 'ought,' implying 'need not necessarily,' and it is this ordinary usage which scientific ethics will have to abandon.

- 8 Now to give up altogether this ordinary sense of the term 'ought' is extremely difficult, even for the Determinist himself. Inevitably, at some point or other, it reasserts itself, affecting his practical attitude to his fellows and his reflective judgments upon his own conduct; and when once the first blush of enthusiasm for our scientific ethics has faded and we come to the study of morality with the single-minded desire for truth—that dispassionate reasonableness which is the essence of science itself—asking if there is not something more in the doctrines of freedom and conscience than we were able to see, we may find cause for readjusting our attitude to the assumptions of Naturalism. Is it true, we begin to ask, that all the facts of experience point to man's being merely part of the natural order?

To attempt a direct answer to this question, dealing only with man's moral or practical life, would perhaps

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be unwise, because the two opposed views—that of the older ‘moral philosophy’ and that of the new ‘scientific ethics’—are at war chiefly as regards their interpretations of the moral life, raising issues of practical moment concerning which it is difficult to preserve a wholly dispassionate and critical frame of mind. But suppose we raise the whole matter from a point of view less affected by personal bias. The new ‘scientific ethics’ is a *theory*. Hence both parties to the dispute will agree that man can theorize, infer, understand. Men can *know* the world about them. Well, we may ask, could man, if he were simply a part or product of nature, form any theory explaining the facts of nature? Could a being who is simply a part of nature form any theories at all? Man, every one will agree, *knows*; and the question we propose asking is: Does not scientific knowledge itself imply in knowledge the operation of some principle different in kind from any mere ‘event’ or mechanically determined ‘series of events’ which, from the Naturalist’s point of view, constitutes that world of nature which we know? If we find such a principle at work, it will imply that in respect of the faculty or function called knowing, at least, man is not merely the child of nature; and the question will then arise whether this non-natural element of his being does not have yet another expression—namely in his practical life as a moral being.





## CHAPTER I

# THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE IN THOUGHT AND REALITY

### A. THE TELEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN KNOWLEDGE

Taking 'Nature' in the sense in which it is understood 9  
by the natural scientist—as a collection or system of  
spatio-temporal events—can we regard the knowledge  
of nature as a part or product of nature? The answer  
to this question will depend on what we take to be the  
character of conscious experience. If experience is a  
connected whole, then something more than a collec-  
tion of spatio-temporal events is required to render it  
possible.

The question here at issue is not whether 'soul' or  
'mind' functions independently of 'body' or 'matter.'  
The question is in a sense more fundamental than that;  
and yet it is one to which we may more easily find  
a clear answer. Suppose it be admitted as scientifically  
demonstrated that all the functions of the soul are  
materially conditioned (and this is admitting more  
than the Naturalist can reasonably claim), it is still  
legitimate to enquire: How exactly have we come by  
such concepts as 'matter,' 'motion,' etc.? What do we  
know about matter, and what do we understand by  
the term? To this the scientist would probably answer:  
I know that matter exists because we do actually  
experience a world of objects. And by 'matter' I  
understand "that which is the real enduring substance  
in any object; that of which this, that and the other  
characteristics may be predicated."

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But it is clear, from this answer, that we can only say what matter is by attributing to it certain qualities; and any quality we do attribute to it—such as weight, etc.—will be found, in the last analysis, to imply the feelings or sense experience of a conscious subject. Matter cannot be intelligibly described except by language which implies that it is the meeting point or focus of certain qualities or relations; and those qualities, in their turn, derive their significance from an ‘experiencing’ on the part of a conscious subject.

10 Hence relation to a subject is necessary to the existence of an object; and this seems to imply that the consciousness for, and in, which the ordered system of objects exists cannot itself be a part or product of that ordered system. Indeed we may go further and affirm that, because the objective order exists for and in consciousness, we can never know or conceive of anything existing apart from consciousness, and that consciousness is the one supreme sustaining principle in reality.

11 This conclusion, however, would not win the approval of all thinkers. It is not accepted even by some who have insisted most strongly on the function of consciousness or ‘understanding’ in constituting objects of experience. In particular, Kant, while holding that the understanding is responsible for the systematic order or ‘form’ of nature, conceives consciousness as  
\* creating this order by operating upon an independently given ‘manifold’ of sense data. This qualification (that the ‘material’ is ‘given’) of his doctrine that the understanding makes nature, will come up for review later; at present we shall confine ourselves to a consideration of the positive function which he does ascribe to consciousness.

12-13 The essence of his doctrine may be brought out if

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we try to understand what is meant by the distinction between a subjective 'illusion' and the objectively 'real.' For example, I think I saw a bird flying outside across my window. Was it really a bird? Perhaps it was only a dead leaf blown across by the wind. Does my thought correspond to the actual reality? No doubt I saw *something*. I had a visual sensation of some kind. The question is: Of what was it the sensation? And this is equivalent to asking whether the sensation was really related as I took it to be related.<sup>1</sup> In supposing that I saw a bird, I have taken the sensation and interpreted it, relating it to past experiences and the whole context of my circumstances. Without such construction of 'meanings' round the sensation, without the attempt to fit it into a place in my system of experience, I should find no significance in the distinction between objective fact and subjective illusion. To perceive or to suppose that one perceives something objective, one must be actively engaged in constructing meanings round sense data; and, apart from such activity on the part of consciousness, there could be, for us at any rate, no objective order at all. Whether or no the contents of experience are entirely dependent on consciousness, it is at any rate clear that the *conception* and the *perception* of an ordered system of nature are dependent on the activity of consciousness. The perception or conception of objects is something very 5: different from merely having a feeling or sense impression. A sense impression may very truly be regarded as the stimulation of an animal organism by a physical existent external to the organism. But this stimulation is not the perception of an object. It is simply the 'occasion' on which consciousness, using this organism

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note B.

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as its vehicle (so to speak), begins to interpret and relate, and thus construct to itself objects of perception. Hence we may say that, while the exciting cause of sensation is external to the animal organism, the object conceived or perceived is not external to consciousness. To suppose that it is so is to confuse 'object of knowledge' with 'exciting cause of physical sensation.'

15-18 Superficially, the result of our analysis so far has no great significance, for it seems merely to say that without the conception or perception of an order of nature we could not conceive or perceive such an order. Actually, however, our analysis is of supreme importance, for it shows that in the knowing or conceiving activity there is operative a principle which is quite different from a mere spatio-temporal event or series of such events. Because 'perceiving' and 'conceiving' are the synthetizing of meanings and relations, then that which conceives and perceives must be a synthetizing or unifying principle. Consciousness, that is, is not a discrete 'series of events.' If we understand 'nature' as it is understood by the Naturalist metaphysics built upon the 'atomistic' theories of natural science, there is involved in 'knowing' a non-natural or supra-natural principle which is neither a part nor a product of nature.

Consciousness cannot be a mere series of events, for there is all the difference in the world between a mere series of events and the consciousness of a series of events. No event in a series and no number of such events can be the consciousness of the series, because the consciousness must be present to each and all of the events in the series. Further, while a series is internally discrete, the consciousness of a series must

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possess a genuine internal unity. Otherwise it would be a series of consciousnesses and not the consciousness of a series.

Again consciousness cannot be the *product* of a mere series of events. *Firstly*, it cannot be the product of the series of which it is the consciousness. A producer precedes its product in order of time; but a series of which there is consciousness cannot precede that consciousness, for the consciousness of the series must be present from the very beginning of the series. *Secondly*, consciousness cannot be the product of a previous series of events, or at least to prove that it is so produced is absolutely impossible; for the essential conditions under which such proof could be offered are entirely absent. When we are informed that A caused B, it is surely a fair demand that the character of A should be presented in such a light as to make it credible that A is competent to perform the task alleged; and it is about as credible that Brer Rabbit built the Forth Bridge as that a discrete series of events produced that which is able to hold such a series together in a unitary act. But, waiving this objection, there is one more serious. If consciousness is said to have been produced by an antecedent series of events, then *ex hypothesi* of that series there was no consciousness. Now when we speak of A as the cause of B, we are always dealing with events or facts which fall within experience. That A has, in our experience, invariably preceded B, is not absolute proof that A caused B, but such uniform connection within experience is at least an essential condition of any significant attribution of such causality to A. But, from the very nature of the case, this condition is absent so far as any question of finding the cause of consciousness is concerned. A uniform con-

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nection can only be experienced when there is such a thing as experience, i.e. only after consciousness itself has come to exist. There can be no experience of anything as being an invariable antecedent of experience or consciousness; and therefore nothing can be intelligibly regarded as its cause.

It is thus clear, both from the positive and from the negative arguments here presented, that, if nature is merely a system or succession of spatio-temporal events, the knowledge of nature involves a principle which is non-natural in the sense that it is not a mere series or succession.

### B. THE TELEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN WILL AND DESIRE

- 85 So far we have been trying to show that experiencing a world of matter of fact implies the existence and operation of a spiritual principle associated with or using as its vehicle an animal organism, this organism being subject to impressions or stimulations by some external existent, these stimuli being the 'occasion' of the mind's constructing to itself objects. But the animal organism is not merely subject to impressions of sense. It is subject also to 'wants.' These wants play the same part in will and desire as sensations play in knowledge. They become the 'occasion' of the mind's constructing to itself objects of desire, and the relation of the 'want' to the 'wanted object' is closely analogous to that of the 'sensation' to the 'object of perception.'

It is important, then, to be clear at the outset on the distinction between a mere want and a wanted object; and upon the validity of this distinction centres the main problem regarding the existence of a spiritual principle in will and desire. The transition from merely

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feeling a want to the conception of a wanted object implies the presence of a subject which distinguishes itself from the want. The subject persists through successive stages of the want (as consciousness persists over a series of events), and through successive wants; hence there arises the conception of "satisfaction of the self as a whole"—a conception which regulates all voluntary activity. ✓

To illustrate the general doctrine outlined above, 96 let us take some particular example—e.g. Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. Hungering, and being offered a meal in exchange for his birthright, he sacrificed the latter for the sake of the former. Now here we have a want and a wanted object. The want is the hunger, the painful body-feeling. The wanted object is the 'eating of the food to dispel the pangs of hunger.' The want and the wanted object are thus quite different in character, the former being only the occasion of the latter's arising. Now it is the *wanted object*, not the *want*, which is the motive force or 'cause' in all voluntary action. If Esau's action in taking the 88 food were determined merely by the want, that action would have no more significance morally than some movement performed in sleep or under the influence of a drug. To be determined to action by a mere want, on the one hand, and to be determined by the conception of a wanted object, on the other, are as different as a ship's being tossed helplessly on the ocean and its being navigated from one distant port to another. The one is not motivated; the other is. The full implications of this distinction between want and wanted object may best be brought out by reference to Locke's theory of volition. Locke believed himself to have made a considerable advance in moral psycho-

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logy when he distinguished himself from other Hedonistic writers by arguing that what moves the will is not future pleasure but present uneasiness. Future pleasure, being non-existent, cannot be a genuine cause. Present uneasiness, being actual and present, must be the moving force; and Locke brings several considerations to support his view. Without endorsing the Hedonistic view that pleasure is always the object of desire, reflection should convince us that the 'future pleasure' theory is much nearer the truth than is Locke's 'present uneasiness' theory. Supposing a mere feeling of uneasiness could determine us to act, how could it determine us to act in a manner appropriate to the circumstances? A feeling of uneasiness might determine us to act *somehow*, but it is impossible to see how it could lead to our doing just that action which removes the uneasiness. Must there not be, antecedent to the action, a *positive idea* of something to be achieved—namely the idea of the uneasiness as being removed and the means to that end? A starving man may be in a state of great uneasiness and desperately anxious to remove that feeling; and if he sees food he may not have sufficient self-control to refrain from eating unwisely. But is this equivalent to saying that the feeling of uneasiness moves him to act? How could this mere feeling, as such, determine him to stretch out his hand for the food? Surely the 'force' moving him to act in that particular way is "the idea of his state as removed by the putting forth his hand and the placing of food in his mouth." It is a positive idea of something to be achieved (the idea of a desirable future state of himself), and not a mere blind sense of present uneasiness, which moves him. The mere want (the hunger) is but the 'occasion' of the



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man's presenting to himself a wanted object. The want is not itself that object.

Neglect of this distinction between mere want and wanted object (and only the neglect of it can give any plausibility to Locke's theory) is due largely to taking for granted, and then forgetting to take into theoretical account, the extent to which will and desire involve the operation of intelligence. Leaving intelligence out of account, what would the situation be? There would be a certain state of the body (the external observer would realize that this state was due to depleted food supplies, but the individual possessing the state, being unconscious of it, would not be aware of its significance), and there might possibly be some feeling of discomfort, but there could be nothing more. That state or feeling might so affect the organism as to make it give spasmodic jerks, or it might cause internal modifications of other organs, but more it could not do. Let us, however, add intelligence, and the situation is altered. The individual becomes *aware* of his bodily condition; he appreciates the cause and general significance of his feeling of want; he understands what circumstances would effect its removal; he has a sensation of a certain sort which he 'constructs' or 'interprets' as 'this bread'; thereupon he conceives himself as removing the feeling of pain by stretching forth his hand and eating the bread. This "idea of himself as eating" is thus made an object of desire or motive to action. We thus see that all properly voluntary action is determined, not by mere want, but by the conception of a wanted object; that object being something which involves the operation of intelligence, and hence, for its existence, involves the same spiritual principle as is involved in all knowledge. The 'want' is involved only as the occasion

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&

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on which the mind constructs to itself a wanted object.

89 From the above, the reader may perhaps assume  
& 91 that animal want or impulse is one component of motive while consciousness is another; that willed, voluntary or motivated action is partly animal and partly rational. But this is not so. As sensation is the occasion of but not part of the perceived object,<sup>1</sup> so a want is not part of but only the occasion of the mind's constructing to itself a desired or wanted object. The motive or wanted object itself is one and indivisible; the want is not contained *in* the resulting motive, however much it may survive *alongside* it until the object of desire becomes a realized fact. Hunger may survive alongside the motive—the motive of “freeing oneself from the pangs of hunger by eating”—but is not part of that motive, any more than the light stimulation of my eyes is a component part of my perceived object in looking at this paper on which I am writing.

95 Certainly motives, like perception, admit of being considered in seemingly opposite ways.<sup>2</sup> While the act of *knowing* is itself non-temporal, in the sense of not being a mere series in time, the process of *learning* is historical in the sense of being a process in time. Similarly, while the motive is constituted by self-consciousness itself, yet self-consciousness acts only upon the occasion of certain circumstances, amongst them an animal want. The kind of motive adopted, the kind of object aimed at, will depend upon the person's character (just as what we ‘see’ in anything depends largely upon the extent of our past experience); and that character has had a history. But the kind of

<sup>1</sup> See above, page 37, and below, page 188.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pages 56 ff.

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history the character has had is not one determined for it by a chain of events over which it has had no control. Its history is a creation of its own reactions, its own adoption of objects and ends to be pursued. Its history is the creation of a self-conscious principle working upon wants of animal origin and circumstances in which the individual has found himself. But this question will be treated at greater length in a subsequent chapter on Freedom. At the present moment our main concern is to emphasize the operation of self-consciousness at the very heart of all practical activity which can be subject to moral praise or blame.

It is true that only by introspection and by interpreting 93 the external behaviour of others do we become aware of the existence of motives in ourselves and in them. Motives are not apparent to the external observer as are the external actions which are determined by those motives. But that is no argument against the existence of motives such as we affirm to operate in men. Just as we know what thinking is only because we are ourselves thinking subjects, and just as the 'picture thinking' in which we indulge cannot be denied to exist simply because the physicist and physiologist would find no pictures in our brains if they could observe the brain during the course of our thinking—so the operation of rational motives is not disproved by anything the physiologist may discover or fail to discover about the way in which our bodies function.

This is a point to be borne in mind when we try 94 to assess the bearing on human psychology of conclusions derived from the study of animal behaviour. Animal behaviour, it is often said, is determined by instinct and not by rational motives; but 'instinct' is, after all, a vague word, standing largely for a number

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92 of 'negatives.' Our conception of instinct is reached by excluding from animal behaviour certain attributes of human activity such as the conscious adaptation of means to ends; and there is far more room for doubt as to what animal behaviour really implies than there is with regard to human conduct. Whatever may be the value of comparative animal psychology, there is clearly no logical justification for first denying to animals rational motives such as we find in ourselves, and then proceeding to assert that "all human conduct is capable of explanation in terms of instinct because men are not in any essential respect different from the rest of the animal order."

### C. THE TELEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN REALITY

19-20 So far our discussion has centred upon the conscious activities called knowing and willing, and has sought to show that, whatever be the source of the manifold of sense-data, and whatever be the source of those wants, the existence of which is implied in our acts of will and desire, still knowing and willing involve the activity of a synthetic or unifying spiritual principle.

In all this we have only been securing the position occupied and defended by Kant. It now remains to be seen whether we can permanently secure Kant's position without advancing beyond it. In order to simplify the issue we have provisionally allowed the assumption that, in constructing its cosmos of experience, consciousness or understanding works upon a given manifold of sense data. The material being supplied, the mind imposes the systematic form. The matter and the form of experience thus exist separately from each

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other, and derive from two quite distinct sources. This assumption must now be more carefully investigated.

It is perfectly clear, of course, that the matter and form of *perceiving*, *thinking* and *willing* cannot be so independent of each other. The thought or the perception of an object has form and content, but the two are inseparably connected. They are inseparably connected because it is the form or active principle of consciousness which performs the interpretative operation upon sensation, and without this imputation of meanings and relations to the sensation there would be no content of perception, for there would be no perception at all.

But it may very well be alleged that, while the form and content of the subject's *perceiving* are inseparable, yet that objective reality which *is perceived* by the subject is not dependent for its existence on consciousness. At least, it will be said, the manifold of sensation out of which consciousness constructs the ordered cosmos of experience does not owe its existence to the mind. Is this a tenable theory?

Let us consider what is commonly meant by the real objective world. It is the world of objects we perceive all around us—tables, chairs, houses, lands, books, etc. These, we say, are realities. But if these are objective realities, then objective reality is not a mere collection of events or impressions. If reality is a manifold, it is not a *mere* manifold but a unified and *systematized* manifold. A 'real' table is no less a system of terms-in-relation than is the idea or perception of a table. There is a synthetic principle operative in reality quite as much as in thought. The proper inference may very well be, then, that this principle is identical with—for it is certainly analogous to—the principle of con-

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sciousness. That which we know is "of the same substance" as our knowing. To embrace this conclusion would be to adopt the position of Naturalism—with a difference. It would be to affirm the unity of man and nature, but in terms of a 'Spiritualist' not a 'Naturalist' philosophy.

This is in fact the conclusion to which we shall be ultimately driven, but we must first notice other views which have been held. It has just been pointed out that what we ordinarily understand by the objective world is not a mere manifold of events or terms, but a system of terms-in-relation. Now if we try to distinguish between the terms and the relations, and ask whether terms do and relations do not possess a substantial reality, the answer is frequently given that objective reality belongs only to the terms. Locke seems to have suggested such a view. Relations, he held, are contributed by the mind; whatever of reality there is in our perceived world is mediated to us through the 'simple ideas' or terms which the mind relates to each other.<sup>1</sup>

30-33;    Once we reflect on such a doctrine as this, there  
& 38    can be no question as to where it is going to lead us. Separating the terms from the relations, and finding the reality in the unrelated terms, it soon becomes clear that the manifold of terms or sense data cannot be regarded as self-existent and underived. They must be data supplied to our senses by external things or substances. Existing outside consciousness these substances must, however, remain for ever unknown. Our knowledge will be confined to their appearances to us.

<sup>1</sup> Green's interpretation of Locke generally has met with a fair amount of criticism on the ground that he over-emphasizes those tendencies in Locke's thought which can most easily place the *Essay* as a "stage in the development of English Empiricism."

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This is the conclusion Kant felt compelled to draw. More clearly than Locke, he saw that if we distinguish between the form and the matter of experience—the formative principle of thought and the manifold of sense—all those relations and qualities which we ordinarily attribute to objects must be relative to consciousness. The relations of cause and effect, of substance and attribute, even the relations of space and time can be predicated of the ‘world of appearance’ only, and not of the real ‘things-in-themselves.’ In fact, if we abstract from experience all that is relative to thought, the ‘objective world’ becomes so bare and nebulous that it is not readily distinguishable from blank nothing. The understanding, in Kant’s pregnant phrase, makes nature.

At the same time Kant still held to the assumption 39 that the material of experience is given to the mind from an external source. Such an assumption, one would suppose, must be in conflict with any belief that nature is an intelligible system, even if we grant that the system of nature is only the phenomenal and not the real world. Sadly reduced in dignity as this given element must be, it still remains an externally given. It must therefore enter consciousness with some positive character of its own, and is therefore not completely amenable to control by the categories of thought. The world of experience must, on this view, be subject to two wholly different kinds of determination—the character the material derives from its external point of origin, and the character it takes on when brought under the categories of thought. Apart from our reluctance to remain content with any such dualistic theory, the implications of such a dualism as this are not likely to be welcomed by the Naturalist. When we remember

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that such categories as that of causality apply only within the realm of experience and belong to the form rather than to the material content of experience, it seems clear that, if the material content is not completely subject to these categories, there must be an element of the irrational, the incalculable, the unpredictable in the world of nature.

40-41;    A further, and in some ways more serious, difficulty  
& 53    in Kant's doctrine is this: He speaks of the manifold of sense data as deriving from the things-in-themselves which are independent of and external to consciousness. This is no different from saying that the manifold is 'caused' by these things-in-themselves. At the same time Kant informs us that the category of causality is a principle imposed by the mind in the organization of its own phenomenal world. To assert a causal relationship, therefore, between things-in-themselves and sense data, is to bring the things-in-themselves within the realm of consciousness. The phenomenal world has swallowed up that external reality on which its material content was supposed to depend. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Kant's doctrine of the thing-in-itself is based largely on a view to which his own critical philosophy has given the death-blow—the view that the object of consciousness is somehow external to consciousness, as the physical 'thing' is external to the animal 'organism.' When it is remembered that both thing and organism are within the world of nature or experience, and therefore within consciousness, the relation of 'thing' and 'organism' must be very different from that of 'object' and 'consciousness.'

To put the whole matter briefly, it is impossible to work out any consistent or adequate metaphysic proceeding on the assumption that the material on



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which consciousness works comes from a purely external source.

Still, it may be said, we simply cannot ignore the 4  
existence of our senses. It is our sense organs which supply the factual basis of all our knowledge; and if sense data do not depend on anything external to consciousness, it is equally ridiculous to regard them as a product of our own thinking. We cannot reduce the world of experience to a web of relations in which nothing is related.

This is a weighty criticism; but it is not a criticism 43  
which touches the doctrine here defended. We do not say that the world of nature is produced by our individual thinking. The criticism is relevant, possibly, to subjective Idealism; and it seems to be relevant to a doctrine such as Kant's which speaks of the understanding as making nature and at the same time assumes that the matter and the form of experience come from two different sources. What we are emphasizing is that this separation cannot be made. We are not primarily concerned with what the thinking subject contributes to the objective system. We are maintaining rather that in experience itself, whether it be regarded from the side of our knowing, or from the side of that which is known, there is operative a formative or unifying principle. This is not to say that the principle of unity exists apart from and independent of, or that it produces, the manifold of experience. It is primarily a denial of the theory which regards nature as a mere sum or series of spatio-temporal events. The contention is not that this principle, as it operates in our individual thinking, creates the objective world; but rather that its existence is most clearly evident in our individual thinking. At the same

time we assert that the world we perceive being a system of terms-in-relation, this principle must be operative in the world which we perceive, quite as much as in our perception and thinking of it. For purposes of analysis we may distinguish matter from form; and, having thus conceptually isolated them, we may pay special attention to the former, but we must remember that the distinction is only conceptual. It is the theoretical abstraction of factors which we always experience together.

- 26-29 The question we raised was: What is implied in any system of terms-in-relation; what is the condition of there being a world of nature or reality? Our answer was that something more than a discrete series is implied. Relations or terms-in-relation involve whatever is involved in the notion of the 'many-in-one.' Abstract the many from the one and nothing is left; and again a mere plurality could not of itself become a unity, nor could a mere unity become also a plurality. What is required to do justice to the character of our world is the conception of a principle which unifies the many without effacing its manyness. In our own thinking we actually find such a principle operative. In such a simple operation as 'comparing' one man with another, we bring them together under the single category of humanity, and yet keep them separate to the extent of being able to say 'this' man is taller than 'that' man. There is operative in thinking and understanding a principle of unity-in-difference. And since the world we perceive and think about is as much a system of terms-in-relation as is the complete act of thinking, there must be involved in that world a principle of the same character as the principle operative in our intelligence.

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This view, as we have already said, does not imply 34-  
that the individual subject creates the objective world. While there might perhaps be some excuse for asserting that such a doctrine is logically involved in a theory like Kant's, which suggests that the categories are 'imposed' by the thinking subject on a 'given' manifold (though we do not necessarily commit ourselves to this interpretation of Kant), we do not ourselves accept a 'subjectivist' view of the categories of thought.<sup>1</sup> The categories are not imposed by us on a given manifold. If our language suggests this, we are speaking metaphorically. It would be equally true to say that our knowledge is the communication to, or the reproduction in us, as individual subjects, of the objective world. The categories which systematize and the manifold which is systematized are communicated or reproduced together. 'Reproduction' rather than 'communication' is perhaps the more appropriate term. However this may be, the point of importance is that the formative principle which operates in thought is at the same time operative throughout reality.

If our doctrine is open to criticism, it would seem 47  
to be so only on a point of terminology—on the question of using a term like 'thought' for this formative principle. Certainly, if thought means nothing more than what goes on in particular subjects who are born and die, to call the principle 'thought' would be absurd. But if it be the best term to indicate that which is essential for constituting relations, then it is more reasonable to modify our notions of thought as

<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of Green brings him much closer to Bosanquet and even to Alexander than he is commonly supposed to be.

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it is exercised by us, than to refuse to recognize its essential identity with the principle which operates in reality as a whole. Actually we make no apology for describing this principle as a Universal Self-consciousness, holding, as we do, that the real character of thought as exercised by us should be interpreted through the character of that objective world which is common to us all. Our thinking, we might say, is the world of objective reality becoming focussed within us.

52-54 If the positive results of this argument seem but meagre and leave untouched some pressing metaphysical problems, it should be remembered that our chief concern is with the subject of morals. We have found it necessary to consider the doctrine of Scientific Naturalism so far as it runs counter to what we regard as a proper interpretation of moral experience. It is our view that neither for man nor for nature is any mechanical, as opposed to teleological, theory ultimately valid. While, for certain special purposes, we may rightly concentrate on the 'manifold' aspect of experience, regarding it as a collection of relatively independent finites, and attempting to discover the relations which hold between this finite and that, we must never forget to correct this one-sidedness when stating the significance of our conclusions for a theory of reality as a whole. Taking objects of experience as mechanically or externally related, we naturally neglect the 'holist' or teleological principle which is implied in their being related at all. It is, however, this teleological aspect of reality which is so important for morals; and that is why we have insisted on the existence of a principle of unity, a principle which is non-natural in the sense in which Scientific Natural-

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ism considers 'nature'—as a system of mechanically related events.

To call this principle super-natural would only give rise to crude misinterpretation. The principle is not above or beyond nature. It is not a cause of which nature is the effect, nor a substance with changing modes. There is indeed no objection to calling it a natural principle if by 'nature' we mean the whole self-determined reality. But as 'nature' is commonly used in a more restricted sense—as equivalent to the universe considered as a collection of 'finites'—it is better to employ the term 'spiritual' to indicate the principle which is implied in reality when reality is viewed from the more complete point of view.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TEMPORAL AND THE ETERNAL

Now the view that reality is a teleological system creates certain problems, one of the most important of which is the question as to the place of time within the system as a whole. The essential features of any teleological system are most easily seen by contrasting conscious or organic life with a piece of machinery. The composite parts of both machines and organisms are so adjusted that they can conduct a complex operation, in which all the parts function, in order to achieve some unitary end. A motor-car may be driven and a man may walk, the purpose in both cases being to get to the House of Commons. The difference between the two lies in the fact that, while the parts of a machine are made separately, and then put together, for the purpose external to its own existence which the machine actually subserves; the parts of an organism develop (so to speak) from within, and, for whatever purpose external to its own life the organism may be used, its complex structure is developed primarily to preserve and enhance its own existence and well-being. A machine is constructed and operates for ends external to itself, or as a means to something else. An organism develops and is controlled from within; and, while it pursues ends external to its own being, the pursuit of these ends is incidental to the enhancement of its own total well-being.

16; Every teleological system, then, may be regarded  
18 & from two points of view—the temporal and the non-  
55-58 temporal. Regarding the particular phases of its be-

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haviour as it reacts now in this way and again in that way, we may speak of its life-history as a temporal process. But regarding all these particular modes of behaviour in their relation to that total life which they conserve and from which they derive their value and significance, we may speak of its essential being as in some sense transcending the temporal process. This double nature is most easily discerned in consciousness. Our conscious experience is, on the one hand, an order of events in time, consisting in modifications of our sensibility; on the other hand, it is the consciousness of those events; and, while in the order of events there is before and after, in the consciousness or knowledge of those events there is no before and after. For, so long as a series of events is contemplated as a series, no member of that series is an object to consciousness before or after the others.

To illustrate this point, let us think of a clock striking the hour of twelve. Let us regard each stroke as an event, and the twelve strokes as a series of events. Now each stroke occupies a segment of time, and the segments are successive, not simultaneous; so that the first stroke has come and gone before the second occurs, and so on. It is also clear that the consciousness of any event must exist at the same time as the event, and the consciousness of the series must extend over the whole series. Again, as we have already argued, the consciousness of the series is not a series of consciousnesses. The series must be embraced in a unitary act of consciousness.

That is to say, there is succession in the series, but not in the consciousness of it.

If we reflect on this, we see that consciousness transcends the limitations of space and time. It is not

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even correct to say that the consciousness of a series is simultaneous with the series; for, in a series, the first event belongs to the past when the second is present, and so on; but the consciousness of the first does not belong to the past, for it is one with the consciousness of the present—i.e. with the consciousness of the third, fourth, sixth or whatever event is now occurring. We can be conscious of succession in time, but the consciousness is not itself a succession in time. Time exists within consciousness, but not consciousness within time.

In the conception of teleological system there is thus a curious paradox. On the one hand, it is quite obvious from practical experience that the time process is not irrelevant to consciousness, and events in time do affect its character. Learning is clearly a temporal process. I may say, e.g., "On such a day I knew the first four propositions and proofs in Euclid. Yesterday I learned the fifth." Again, there may be a change from unconsciousness to consciousness which can be dated with reference to temporal events. "At five o'clock I was, I believe, unconscious; at nine o'clock I am fully conscious."

But while all this may be true, the temporal character of 'coming to know' or 'coming to consciousness' cannot affect the character of what consciousness itself is. Whatever history our present knowing may have had, knowledge itself is something essentially different from a mere temporal process. Events which are the necessary conditions of our present state of knowledge have an historical relation to our present state of knowledge. But so far as that relation is known to us, so far as this historical relation becomes an object to consciousness, it has no temporal relation to consciousness. It has become part of a complex of terms-in-relation



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within consciousness itself. So far as events in time become objects to consciousness, they carry with them the wealth and complexity of their temporal origin into a non-temporal system.

Now, at first sight, this double character of conscious life may suggest that man partakes of two wholly different orders, the temporal and the non-temporal. But such a doctrine would neglect entirely the conclusion to which we have already come regarding the operation of the spiritual principle in nature. The non-temporal principle, while it is most clearly discernible in our thinking, is equally present throughout reality. The events of the historical process which, relative to our consciousnesses, are presented as a succession, are nevertheless made what they are by the operation of the spiritual principle in nature itself. Difficult as it may be to understand how the temporal and the non-temporal are united without contradiction, the plain truth is that they are united. Just as our *perception* of a succession involves both succession in the 'modifications of our sensibility' and the activity of a synthetic principle which is not in succession, so the *existence* of that which appears to us in the form of a succession is possible only through the operation of the same kind of principle in nature. The temporal and the eternal are not separable the one from the other. The eternal can *be* only by manifesting itself in an historical order. An order of historical development is possible only as the temporal manifestation of an eternal whole which is not itself developing.

So far as this raises problems concerning the nature and significance of human development, the principal facts we have to explain are intellectual and moral development.

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A.—The process of learning is obviously a temporal process. It is equally true that the end to which we are striving—complete truth—is not simply created by us in the process of learning. Truth is eternal and unchanging, and our efforts in the time process are directed to making this eternal truth our own. There is only one supposition in accordance with which the process of learning can be explained. We may say that the eternally complete 'form' of self-consciousness is gradually communicating itself to us so as to bring to ever-increasing coherence the 'matter' which is our sense experience; or (what is but another way of saying the same thing) that the eternally complete reality is gradually reproducing itself in us, or expressing itself in new modes which we are.

68-73 This view of the relation of the temporal to the eternal, and in particular the suggestion that the 'end' or 'perfection' of the developing process is eternally real, may be regarded with distaste by those who distrust wordy speculation; and were the problem before us unique, finding no analogy elsewhere in our experience, we should be inclined to agree with such critics. But this same difficulty, which we find in describing the relation of the temporal to the non-temporal in knowledge, attaches to the description of any developing process. To speak of development, without implying an end towards which the development is tending, is to speak unintelligibly. And yet if we do recognize that an 'end' is implied in a process of development, must we not also agree that the end is somehow guiding the process itself? Is not this the essential meaning of Aristotle's conception of the 'real' or 'essential' nature of a thing as that which expresses its 'perfection'? The perfection, end or final form of

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the developing thing actually is *not* there at any stage of the development, and yet it is somehow present as a controlling influence. Indeed it must be somehow present from the beginning; otherwise there is a mere process of change and not a genuine development. The thing itself is not developing; or, at the most, we can only say that it is developing towards itself; and, again, the stages in the developing process are not something separable, existing apart from the essence of the thing itself. There are the non-temporal and the obviously temporal aspects, both inextricably bound together in the one developing thing. These general remarks, applicable to every process appropriately called 'evolutionary,' hold equally with regard to consciousness. Consciousness has its eternal, complete, perfect aspect—a completeness implied in the growth of knowledge, quite as much as the full-grown man is implied in the growing child—and its historical aspect; but it is still only the *one* consciousness.

We must therefore conclude that there is a consciousness for which the object of our developing knowledge eternally exists; and our growing knowledge is a progress towards this consciousness.

B.—Turning to the subject of moral development, we find confirmation of this way of conceiving the relation of the temporal to the eternal.

In a previous section<sup>1</sup> we have seen that the 'cause' of specifically human or voluntary action is a 'motive,' and we have seen that consciousness is absolutely essential to the existence of motives. But a further point to notice is that man's practical life does not consist in the satisfaction of a series of isolated desires

<sup>1</sup> Pages 40 ff.

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as each arises. Because consciousness is itself a unity, and not a mere series of conscious states, our desiring nature has a unity also. The situation confronting Esau was not "Here is a want (hunger), and the means of satisfying it in the hands of my brother Jacob"—a single desire and the means to its gratification. There were present at least two wants or inclinations—the inclination to food, and the inclination to retain the birthright. There was the notion, not merely of the satisfaction of a particular desire, but also of the satisfaction of *self*, and the question Esau had to answer was, "Will the food or the birthright give me most satisfaction on the whole?" Practical life is not simply the satisfaction of some desire occupying the whole field of attention. We have capacities, tendencies, wishes, needs, in different directions and referring to different sides of our nature. We cannot satisfy them all, partly because we have not sufficient means, and partly because the satisfaction of one would automatically remove essential conditions for the satisfaction of others. Even the ends which we pursue, and for the attainment of which we would sacrifice almost everything else, can never be completely attained by anyone in this life. But the notion of complete satisfaction, as somehow and somewhere *possible*, is the regulative idea guiding all practical endeavour after even temporary satisfactions; and it is the parent of all those social institutions, such as the family, school, parliamentary government and industrial organization, which have given to the life of man the content it now has.

This conception of there being a Best state for man—the regulative idea of complete satisfaction and perfect development of all he has it in him to become—impels us to seek in the realm of will and desire a

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counterpart to that Eternal Consciousness which is implied in the notion of development towards complete knowledge; for we have to remember that practical life is meaningless unless it be conceived as the development towards some end or ideal. The end which is aimed at, that which is not yet but which is to be, is somehow existing for consciousness; otherwise it could not control, as in fact it does, the effort directed towards its own realization. The possession of the Birthright was an end controlling Jacob's policy. It was not actually realized; but it exerted a controlling influence in his early life. We have seen that in any kind of development or evolution—e.g. the development of an animal organism to its true or 'perfect' nature, or the development of incomplete apprehension to complete apprehension of truth—the end is somehow eternally real, its eternal agency being implied in the notion of the developing process itself. 173

Now, the question is, are we to deny, in relation to man's practical ideals, what we find everywhere else? Are we entitled to assume that there is a Best state for man, and that this Best state is present to some eternal consciousness, and that a regulative idea of there being such a state has been the essential influence in the process by which man has so far bettered himself, and that its continued operation is the condition of all further advance?

The justification for such an assumption is the argument by which such a Consciousness has been seen to be involved in the operation of our intellect. The essential facts in both cases are the same. We can understand the gradual realization of human capacities through generations of toil and struggle, from a good to a better state of being, only on the assump- 174

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tion that an eternally realized Best is gradually reproducing itself in us and directing all that is permanent  
175 achievement. In virtue of this self-reproducing principle in man, his life is not a mere succession of satisfactions, or a mere process of change, but a gradual actualization of capacities and possibilities.

186 There are, of course, difficulties in this theory of human development. We are assuming, e.g., that there is real development as distinct from a mere succession of changes, and the disinterested enquirer will confess that, judging by externals alone, it would be hard to set out a final and convincing proof of the validity of the notion of progress. But the question is not to be decided merely by what we can observe. Were it not for a demand within ourselves, we should never have conceived the notion of progress at all; for the authority of this idea rests upon a demand for something in the world of fact answering to the existence of purpose in ourselves. Just as the scientific understanding demands a unity in the world of existence answering to the unity of itself, so our practical nature demands that the history of the world, so far as bound up with the history of man, should record in some fashion or other the fact that our activity has been consciously directed from good to better under the regulative idea of the Best.

181; We can, at any rate, say that, if the idea of progress  
184 & is at all valid, it necessarily carries with it two main  
187 implications:

(1) That the capacities, gradually realized in time, must be eternally realized in the eternal mind. When we speak of any subject as developing towards an end, we imply that what the subject is developing towards already exists for some consciousness. It is *potentially*,

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we say, that which it is not as yet *actually*. For the developing subject something is possible though it is not actual. But if there were no consciousness at all for which that 'possible' state existed—if it were not the object of some consciousness—there would be no sense in speaking of it as 'possible.' We could not speak of it, for it would be nothing at all. Hence, when we speak of the human spirit as being something in possibility, we imply that there is a consciousness for and in which this something really exists.

(2) The second implication is that the end or perfection of the process of development must be the end of that process; and, as the development under consideration is that of humanity, the 'perfection' reached must be one in which genuinely human possibilities are realized. E.g. the perfection must exist, not only in and for a conscious subject, but also *as* a conscious subject, because the being undergoing the development is a conscious subject. Hence, if there is any validity in the notion of human progress, there must be an eternally perfect self-conscious being.

This suggests the true spiritual relation in which, as intelligent agents, we stand to the Universal Self-consciousness (or, in theological language, God). We exist as reproductions of It (or Him), and *It is* all that we are capable of *becoming*.

It is true that we cannot fully understand how this one divine eternal self-consciousness individuates itself in persons, each with his own centre of life; and it is even more difficult to see how it can be fully realized in them—the infinite in the finite. The individual's life is so limited that it seems incapable of ever adequately

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embodying the divine principle—a limitation which is not even accidental, inasmuch as the limitation is necessary for anything definite to be realized at all. A man does not advance from the good to the better except by concentrating his powers. He becomes great not by indifference to the 'meaner duties' of his station, nor by looking with visionary eyes on the ends of the earth for 'great opportunities' to turn up, but by single-minded attention to the duties of his station, viewing them in the light of a general practical ideal so as to distinguish between the 'moral detail' and the 'conventional triviality.' On some such analogy as the relation between general ideal and detailed duty we must understand the way in which infinite perfection becomes actualized in the temporal history of individual lives. If we find it impossible to understand this at all, if the realization of an infinite in the finite seems so self-contradictory that we feel compelled to deny to the finite any possibility of perfection, surely this must be because we entertain a conception of the  
182 infinite for which there is no warrant. It is only through the finite that we reach the conception of an infinite, through the conception of a personal good that we reach the notion of an eternal perfection. The infinite perfection is, if we care to express the point so, an 'hypothesis' to explain what we are, and to explain our endeavours to become more fully what we really are. Any theory of this perfection must clearly be consistent with our full personal character, that character and its attributes being presupposed as the facts which the hypothesis is designed to explain. What we have been considering is the development of personal character, through personal character, to personal character; and we have argued that an eternal infinite



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perfection is implied in this development, an infinite of which we are reproductions or 'self-communications,' and which is all that we are capable of becoming.

To say it is all that we are capable of becoming 18 suggests that we are capable of becoming all that it is; and as this perfection is fully realized for no one here on earth, we may be justified in supposing that our life is continued in a society which carries further the degree of perfection here attained. Or we may say that the personal self-conscious character which comes from God is forever continued in God. It is difficult to see how this second way of putting the matter can be intelligible without implying the first—the genuine continuation of personality into a society beyond bodily death; but at any rate the complete realization of personal capacities is necessarily involved. Whether such completion involves (a) a life beyond the present, or (b) simply the 'eternal realization' of human capabilities in a Universal Self-consciousness, in the sense that we finite beings (who are reproductions of it) can do 'perfectly' the duties of our station here—the main thing is that this perfection can be realized only in some form of personal character, and not in any impersonal mode of being.

To sum up the main argument: We were to explain how the temporal side of life in man and in reality is related to the non-temporal or eternal; and the argument is that we can understand man's progress in knowledge and in practice only on the assumption that an eternal and universal self-consciousness is gradually reproducing itself in him—that same universal self-consciousness which is implied in the existence of the world of nature.

## CHAPTER III

### FREEDOM

#### A. INTELLIGENCE AS A 'FREE CAUSE'

So-called scientific theories of ethics have discarded the notion of freedom, supposing that man can be treated as part of nature, nature being conceived as mechanistic. We have found cause to reject the doctrine of Naturalism, arguing that there is in man a spiritual principle, and thus traversing the fundamental assumption of Naturalism. But to deny the assumptions on which the denial of freedom was based, is hardly sufficient to constitute a proof of freedom; and so in the present chapter we shall try to show that the freedom of man is directly involved in the view of human nature we have adopted.

80; We have to remind the reader, at the outset of this  
83-4 discussion, however, that it is human nature we are  
& 89 concerned with; and, if animals have no minds such  
as we know ourselves to possess, then we must assert  
that something different in kind from the animal 'soul'  
has supervened upon the merely organic evolution  
from the lower animals to man, though that organic  
evolution may have been the necessary condition of  
such supervention.

78-9 But, it may be asked, is not this giving man a dual  
nature, making him half God, half beast? As an  
animal organism is he not part of the determined  
world? And, since all his actions involve bodily activity,  
they must be subject to the laws governing the natural  
order. Does all this talk of freedom make much real  
difference, then, to the naturalist's contention that

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man's conduct, so far as subject to observation, and so far as it affects his fellows, is part of the mechanically ordered system of nature?

Our answer is that to say man is partly a product of nature, because an animal system is organic to his life, is no more true than the assertion that an animal is partly mechanical because mechanical operations take place within it. Mechanical operations, which take place within or subserve the purposes of a teleological system, must be viewed quite differently from mere mechanism as such. Similarly, because it subserves or is the vehicle of a self-conscious principle, the human organism has to be viewed quite differently from an organism merely as such. While animal nature is organic to knowing, the man who knows is not an animal even in part. A digestive system which nourishes a thinking brain is different—quite apart from any actual physical differences—from the digestive system which does not.

The question whether man is free, then, is the question whether, as a self-conscious subject, he is in any way a self-determined or free cause, as the initiator of processes and effects in the world of factual existence.

Ordinarily, by 'cause' we mean some event which 7 invariably precedes some other specific event, or the sum total of the conditions into which the latter may be analysed. Such a cause would not be a free cause, as it would be but one link in a chain of events. The assemblage of conditions has been conditioned, in its turn, by other conditions; and this applies *ad infinitum* throughout the realm of nature. If we think of nature as the system of related events, then nowhere *in* that system can we find a free cause.

Nature can, however, be viewed not as an assem-

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blage of conditioned events but as a one-in-many, and then we can have the notion of a free cause, namely the spiritual principle implied in this one-in-many. If this assertion sounds too obscure, perhaps its meaning can be elucidated by considering the two ways in which we can regard an animal organism. An animal organism can be regarded as a complex of tissues and mechanical devices; and we can show how, e.g., stimulation and contraction of a muscle, and the pull on a tendon attached to bone result in the raising of the forearm. Each of these events is conditioned by and conditions other events; each may be regarded as the cause of the event following it, but not as a *free* cause. But, again, we can consider, not the 'linear' relation of these events to each other, but their total significance; we can consider their function in the activity of the organism as a whole. Regarded thus, they are seen to be more than merely mechanical events; they appear as elements in a teleological system. Each event is conditioned, not merely by that which precedes it, but also by the effort of the system as a whole to 'persist in its own being' and maintain itself. This effort after self-maintenance on the part of the organism is a 'free cause' in a sense in which none of the detailed causes within the total reaction is a free cause. A free cause is teleological; a 'natural' or 'caused cause' is mechanistic; and that the two are quite different in nature, and that explanation in terms of the latter can never be finally adequate, was recognized long ago by Plato.<sup>1</sup>

Because an organism is part of a larger and more inclusive system, it can never provide more than a partial illustration of 'free causality'; the organism

<sup>1</sup> *Phaedo*, 98-99.

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being itself affected by conditions over which it has no control; but the difference between the activity of the organism as a whole, and the action of those mechanical processes within it, which, as we say, "make up the sum total" of that activity, affords at least a clue to what we mean by distinguishing 'free cause' from 'conditioned causes.' Indeed, when organic 77 nature fails to supply an adequate illustration, we shall look in vain for any sufficient illustration in nature, nothing within nature being comparable to that which renders nature itself possible. The conception of 'free causality,' like so many of those notions philosophy is called upon to discuss, is not arrived at through any process of external observation. It compels recognition because we are aware of exercising such causality ourselves in our activity as knowing subjects. On the basis of this immediate awareness, philosophical reflection leads to the conviction of there being an intelligent free cause operative in the universe as a whole—an intelligence of which we are individual reproductions.

Why this reproduction should take place, and how 74 it is possible for the reproductions of the one eternal 8: self-consciousness to occur as genuine individual persons, we cannot explain; but our view seems best able to cover the known facts. And, it must never be forgotten, our factual starting point is that there are self-conscious individual persons. We know self-consciousness first in ourselves, and only by philosophical reflection upon its character do we learn to think of it as infinite and eternal, having a being over and above its embodiment in this or that individual person; and whatever we can say of it in its universal character—e.g. that it is the principle without which

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there could be no unified world of fact; that it is a free cause in the sense of being the unconditioned condition of the world of nature—whatever we can say of it can likewise be said, to a less degree, of our own individual consciousness, just because the two—the finite and the infinite—are in principle one.

Thus, speaking so far only of our knowing, we can say that man as intelligence exerts a free causality with reference to the events which are the contents of his consciousness.

### B. WILL AS A 'FREE CAUSE'

113-4 It remains true, however, that, for the moral philosopher, man's freedom in will and action, rather than his freedom as intelligence, is the thing of greatest moment.

In beginning our account of practical freedom, it will be well to recall our principal conclusions in the section on "The Teleological Principle in Will and Desire." There we saw that a spiritual principle is operative in will and desire, for the cause of all specifically human action is a 'motive,' a motive being the idea of a wanted object to be actualized through effort; and this motive is not a merely natural want or 'affect,' but is constituted by the principle of self-consciousness in man. We are now going to maintain that, because 97 man constitutes or *makes* the cause of his own action, he is in the world of practice, no less than in the world of knowledge, a free cause.

110 In order that our view may not be misunderstood, we must dissociate ourselves from those advocates of free-will commonly known as Indeterminists. *First*, we reject the conception of freedom which identifies

<sup>1</sup> See above, page 40.

## Freedom

it with 'undetermined' in the sense of 'unmotivated' choice. An act of will which was unmotivated would aim at nothing; it would not be an act of will or choice at all. It would be mere unaccountable chance. When we shake off the bondage of mere words and pay attention to psychological fact, we see that the adoption of, or the being determined by a motive *is* choice. To say we have a motive in action is but another way of saying that we *will*. *Secondly*, we repudiate the contention that circumstances have nothing to do with how a man acts. External circumstances are very relevant to conduct. *Thirdly*, we deny that a man can choose irrespective of what his character is; his character, which has had a history, and which would not be what it is but for that history, determines what his motive will be or how he will choose.

Having rejected these tenets of the "defenders of free-will," it would not be a misreading of our position to say that, according to our view, a voluntary action is the joint and necessary result of character and circumstances.

But, it will be asked, holding such a position, are we not simply professing the theory of Determinism, and by that very profession asserting that the notion of free will is an erroneous one? No; our view is not Deterministic; and the difference between the two is to be found in the different conceptions of 'character' held by us and by the Determinists. As both we and the Determinists hold that action is the joint result of character and external circumstances, our maintaining the doctrine of Freedom will involve our saying that determination by character is *free* activity. That is precisely what we hold.

To say that *action* is the necessary result of character 106

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and circumstance, does not imply that *character* is a  
109 *necessary agent*. We look upon character as a free agent. Determinism regards it as a necessary agent—as a link or complex of links in a chain of natural causes. What leads the Determinist to this view; what is the assumption upon which he discusses character? Briefly, his assumption is that character, circumstance and resulting act are three *events*, all on the same level—as the lighting of a match, the applying it to a cask of powder, and the explosion which follows may be said to be three events all on the same level. This view of the relation of character, circumstances and resultant act is untrue, as will become clear if we define more precisely what character, circumstances and act really are.

(1) *Circumstances* are the prominent features of any situation in which an individual finds himself, those features which specially invite his attention. At the moment the noteworthy circumstances of my situation are that I am sitting before the window, engaged on a piece of work. The day is showery, but the present interval is bright. These circumstances are all facts concerning my present state and the world around me; and the external circumstances (the sunny interval, the prospect of rain, etc.) are things over which I have no control, but which are relevant considerations which I take into account if I ask myself whether I ought to continue working or take the opportunity of some fresh air and exercise.

(2) My *character* is myself. It is not a state or condition of my being. It is my being. It is not something predicated of me. It is myself of which certain qualities may, rightly or wrongly, be predicated. My character, in the 'order of reality,' is not on a level with such



## Freedom

'circumstances' as the brightness of the day and the green-ness of the grass, but rather with the sun which is shining and the grass which is reflecting the sun's rays. Circumstances, we may say, are *adjectival*; 107 character is *substantive*. If by character is meant something other than the man himself, if it means something like a minute history of what the man has done in the past, or an interpretation of that history such as a mistress writes out for a servant leaving her establishment, then that is not what *we* mean by character, and that is not what, in conjunction with circumstances, 'necessarily determines' how a man acts. A man's character is not the sum-total of the past and present events of his life; it is not an interpretation of those events. His character is his being, or self, or—character. Circumstances are adjectival *states* of being; character is substantive *being*.

(3) An *action* is something which a being *does*. It is a mode of behaviour, as the green-ness of the grass may be said to be a mode of behaviour of the grass when it reacts to certain circumstances.

From all this, it will be seen that the circumstances in which we act, and the act we perform, are two 'events' on the same level, or of the same order of reality. They are adjectival, or modes or appearances of being; as distinguished from character which 'appears' in action. Character is something which *does*; action and circumstances *are done* or *happen*. The cardinal error of Determinism is that it abstracts the act, or the appearance of character, from the character which 'does' or 'appears' in the action, hypostatizes the act, and then proceeds to treat character itself as if it were an event or complex of events on the level of circumstances and acts. But, once we reflect upon the

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difference in kind between character and circumstance—the two contributory factors in producing action—it becomes easier to see how an act, which is an expression of character, can be a necessary result of character and circumstance, in the sense that it is what happens when that character reacts to these circumstances, without holding that character is itself a necessary agent. Here are certain circumstances in which I am placed. I want this; therefore I do that. My doing, which expresses my character, could not have been done in that particular way had I wanted differently or had the circumstances been different, and I should certainly have wanted differently had the circumstances been different; so that that particular action necessarily implies just that character and just those circumstances. But there is no necessity about my having *wanted* the particular thing I actually did want. I *know* I should have wanted differently had the circumstances been different, but that is because I have enough intelligence to know what I want or like. It does not follow that what I like is determined by forces outside me.

But once we begin to abstract action from character, and think of three events, two (character and circumstance) combining to produce the third (action), we get into the toils of the theory of external determination. It is perfectly true that all 'events' are 'necessarily determined,' in the Determinist's sense of 'necessity,' in the sense that events as such are conditioned by something other than themselves. But it does not at all follow from this that *agents* have the conditions of their behaviour outside themselves. The confused thinking so commonly surrounding the problem of freedom might perhaps be somewhat dispelled if those dealing with it remembered the difference in kind between

## *Freedom*

character, on the one hand, and circumstance and action, on the other.

When we try to avoid the mere verbalities of the free-will controversy, and pay attention to the facts, we see that the relation of act to circumstances is wholly different from the relation of act to character, just because act and circumstance are both adjectival, the act being adjectival to character, and the circumstance being adjectival to something in the agent's environment. We can even illustrate the point from plant and animal life. On a sunny day the flower opens up to the sun. The 'sun's shining' is a circumstance to which the flower reacts; but the 'opening' is an act of the flower, not of the sunny afternoon. The resultant act is an act of the flower, in a sense in which it is not a direct act of the circumstance which has called forth that reaction; and the higher we go in the scale of being, the more do we find the control of the reaction falling to the share of the agent, the external circumstances more and more taking on the function of simply offering invitations and suggestions which the agent reacts to in the way it deems fitting and suitable. When we reach the level of self-conscious beings such as man, it is difficult to make out any case for the belief that the character-factor and the circumstance-factor are at all commensurable. Our own inner experience is the final court of appeal in any question as to how we act; and experience testifies that the cause of action is the presentation to the self, ideally, of a certain state of things as 'good.' Certain stimuli from the outside happen to us, and upon these 'occasions' the mind becomes active, dragging the significance out of these stimuli, idealizing situations which have as yet no factual counterpart, and,

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with the notion of actualizing those situations, performs some activity. Is there any analogy between the part played by the self-conscious agent, and the part played by the external circumstance, in determining what the resultant act is to be? To place the two on the same level (and that is what the Determinist attempts to do) is like saying that, for a certain great military victory, the credit belongs to General Rainboro and Private Buff, because Private Buff's helter-skelter flight from a certain copse gave General Rainboro a valuable clue as to the disposition of the enemy troops.

100-2;  
& 112 It may be replied that this argument owes its apparent strength to, and reveals its real weakness in, the fact that we are treating character as a heaven-born thing with no earthly history. Surely character (it will be said) has come to be what it now is through an historical development. Is not our character formed by what we have done in the past; and, if character determines what we do in the present, have we really answered the Determinist?

Certainly there has been historical development of character, just as there has been development of knowledge; but, when considering that development, we cannot leave out of account the operation of the self-conscious principle which is involved in all voluntary action here and now. The history of character has been its own history, and not a mere succession of events determining it from the outside. Character in action expresses itself as the adoption of certain objects which it conceives as good or desirable. True, the objects pursued in the past have a profound effect on our pursuits here and now, but the adoption of those objects in the past has involved the action of self-consciousness directed to the 'form of the good'

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Character has been made, but it has made itself, or rather it has made its own history by its reactions to circumstances with a 'view to the good.' The fact that character grows and that past influences present, appears to lead to Deterministic conclusions only because we persist in thinking in terms of external events following each other in a series, the earlier giving rise to the later under some blind law of necessity. But here again, if we look at the plain facts, as we did in considering the relation of character, circumstance and act, we shall see how different is the relation of past action to present character and action from what the 'chain of events' theory suggests. At the present moment I am engaged upon the writing of a book. That it should be written is an object of my will or choice. That I have so chosen to act certainly depends upon my personal character and profession. But what my employment is depends upon the way in which I have reacted to situations in the past. I chose that profession under the form of the good; and the situation which made that choice a possible alternative was also brought about by choice on my part. We are far from denying that circumstances over which I had no control had a great deal to do with the setting of the alternatives between which I had to choose; but my history is the history of my reactions to those circumstances, involving choice throughout the whole process. Even to say that my present character is the result of my past reactions to circumstances, while it may be a statement permissible in untechnical conversation, is a very superficial indication of the real facts; and it is definitely false if meant to imply that my present reaction is the result of those past reactions, for such a view regards my history as a 'series of

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happenings' divorced from the agent implied in those happenings, giving them a 'substantiality' of their own.

When we deny that present action is determined by past history, we do not mean to deny that past actions influence present, but only to deny that past actions are the chief factor in determining present action. When I have made a choice and acted, the action is not primarily an *effect on* character, but an *expression of* character; and, in order to see how past history influences present conduct, we must try to understand how, precisely, an expression of character affects character itself. We shall see that the main (though not the only) influence my past has on my present is not in its modifying my character, but in its helping to create the external circumstances with reference to which I must act. In other words, my history helps to set the external situation with reference to which I shall act. It does not determine what line of action I shall take to meet that situation.

To make this point more clear—

An action, or choice, or expression of character has effects which may be divided into (1) The creation of an external situation which becomes a 'circumstance for consideration' in relation to my next act of will; (2) The strengthening of a habit or disposition to act in just that way in just those circumstances.

(1) So far as the external effects of a past action are concerned, they affect character only indirectly, not directly; like any other external circumstance, they provide the 'occasions' with respect to which character will express itself anew. Every action is a new beginning and a new ending; not a fettered but a free handling of a situation. My past actions are not

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me; they do not determine my future actions. They create present situations to which I designedly react. This is not to say that I am not concerned with or affected by my past actions. Their external effects do concern me, for they form part of my circumstances. I have to bear the consequences of what I have done, and live in the world which I have created round myself. The point is that they do not directly mould my character, and they do not, any more than other external conditions, determine what my future action is to be. It is *I* who determine that, in view of the circumstances I have helped to create and in view of what I now *want* to do. If I have been dishonest in the past, my dishonesty has created certain circumstances in which I have got to act; but my past dishonesty determines nothing as to how my future action will deal with those circumstances. I may murder to cover my knavery; I may repent and perform an act of restitution; but it is I who determine what I shall do.

(2) But besides the external effects of my past actions, there are internal ones which do directly affect character. To take a simple example from bodily activity. If I am cutting down a tree, the external effects are a situation in view of which, at the appropriate moment, I move out of the way to avoid the tree's fall. The *internal* effects of what I have been doing may be summed up as the development of a greater aptitude in the use of the axe. Similarly, anything I do, besides creating external circumstances, develops in me a faculty or aptitude for doing that kind of thing. It results in a modification of myself so that, those circumstances again recurring, I shall more easily and spontaneously perform that same operation. Thus the noteworthy thing about the inner effect of

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action is that it increases the disposition to *like action* in *like circumstances*—it encourages a *habit*. But it is important to recognize that even these internal effects of past action are able to grow only on the sufferance of free purpose; i.e., they guide action only so far as they themselves are amenable to the service of those things which the agent takes to be good or desirable. It is only loose and superficial thinking which concurs in the statement that man is controlled by habits. Habits certainly 'lead' men to practices and indulgences which at other times—some time before or some time after the habit has been indulged—they regard as bad or injurious to themselves. But at the time of the 'indulgence' there is genuine will and desire for that to which the habit is directed. It is taken, for the time, as part of the man's total good, something in which he will find satisfaction. The end attained, and the pleasure accompanying it having lost its 'first fine careless rapture,' the man may blame himself for lack of self-control; he may assert that the end attained has no real worth and is indeed in conflict with worthy ends. But contemplation of the relative worth of ends in a cool hour is one thing; it is quite another thing when, a discomfort or want arising and its meaning being apprehended, there is clearly present to the mind the easy, acquired means of relief. The relief from present discomfort, the pleasure of 'letting oneself go' may, like the enjoyment of a mess of pottage, seem worth the sacrifice of a birthright to be possessed in a problematical future.

But if the end attainable by the habit is clearly and unequivocally contemplated as undesired and undesirable, then it is impossible that that habit should long continue to express itself in action. The truth



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of this assertion can be tested by anyone moderately accustomed to introspection.<sup>1</sup> Habits or dispositions to act in certain ways in certain circumstances issue in action only so far as they themselves are called into play by the effort after an end which, for the time, the agent regards as part of his total good. So far as will or purpose or choice is fixed to a good which excludes, and is felt to be in contradiction with the end attainable by this habit, the habit itself is blocked, frustrated, inhibited.

The supreme control exercised by the idea of a good, self-consciously presented by the agent to himself, is obscured by our speaking of being moved to act by 'desire' as opposed to 'will' or 'reason'; and by our speaking as if, after a conflict of desires, the strongest and winning desire took control of the self. We shall deal with this subject more fully in the following chapter; but, if we may be permitted to anticipate conclusions to be there explained and justified, it is only an inadequate psychological analysis which countenances the doctrine that we can be moved to act now by this and again by that 'faculty' or 'part' of the soul; or the doctrine that will is merely a name for the 'strongest' desire. In all voluntary action (and 'habit' is voluntary action) we are guided by a motive or idea of a good to be achieved. If, in our next chapter,

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<sup>1</sup> The following illustration seems relevant to the argument of the text: The front gate of my house used to be difficult to open. My method was to turn the handle firmly and then push with my shoulder. During the summer, when I was away from home, the defect was attended to and the gate now opens in a normal way. But, in spite of an absence of two complete months, for a short time after my return home I invariably turned the handle vigorously and pushed with my shoulder. That was clearly an habitual reaction, but the habit was not long in disappearing, as it served no useful purpose.

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we can justify what has here been said about habit, we shall have answered most of the serious objections which may be brought against our defence of the doctrine of freedom.

We hold, then, that, while character has an historical growth, and while its past actions create external circumstances and produce habitual dispositions, these external and internal effects do not of themselves determine what the man's future action is to be. They are determinative factors only so far as they make suggestions to or subserve conscious purpose; and they themselves are brought into being through the operation of the same self-conscious effort after a good which infuses that purpose. Thus, to admit that character has a history, is perfectly compatible with the contention that the reaction of character to circumstance (which is the form of all voluntary activity) is the action of a 'free cause.'

98-9 In the light of this discussion we shall have to reconsider an assumption made near the beginning of this section. When we first spoke of action as the reaction of character to circumstance, we took it for granted that 'circumstances' were wholly beyond the control of the agent in the sense that he had no hand in their creation. But it will be clear from our discussion<sup>1</sup> of the history of character that this assumption is not true without qualification. Not only does man create his own motives but he to a great extent is responsible for the circumstances which are the 'occasions' of his entertaining just those particular motives and ideals. It is perfectly true that very many of his circumstances are due to causes over which he has had absolutely no control, but the neglect to

<sup>1</sup> Page 78.

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take account of the extent to which our circumstances are the result of our own past activity, shows how liable we are to leave out whole ranges of relevant fact—ranges of fact whose relevance is obvious and undeniable once they are pointed out—when we discuss in a merely abstract fashion the problem of freedom.

To summarize: Man as intelligence—as a reproduction of the eternal self-consciousness—exercises free causality in constituting the world of knowledge; and, from the side of practice, this same self-conscious principle within him makes him a free agent. He determines himself to act in view of circumstances; he is not determined from without, either by external circumstances or by the iron hand of the past events in his own history.

## CHAPTER IV

### INTELLECT AND WILL

115-7 Concerning the problems discussed in previous chapters, we have tried to work out parallel arguments relating, on the one hand, to thought, and, on the other, to practice. The teleological principle in knowledge has its counterpart in the teleological principle in will and desire; the relation of man as intelligence to the spiritual principle in reality has its counterpart in the relation of man as will to the spiritual principle in reality; the freedom of man as intelligence has its counterpart in the freedom of man as will. But do thought and practice merely move along parallel lines? Are they not more intimately related to each other? Indeed the suggestion that they are is forced upon us by our account of will and desire. The 'motive,' which is the will in action, is the idea of an end or good to be realized. Does not this imply that thought enters into the very texture of will itself, and that intellect and will are not really separable from each other? We shall now try to answer this important question, giving an answer in the affirmative. Not the least important result of such an answer will be its effect on the problem of freedom. In criticizing certain doctrines, in the chapter on freedom, we asserted that difficulties in this matter are largely due to personifying 'faculties' in the individual soul, supposing that now reason, again habit, now passion and again will takes control. Rejecting this attempt to parcel out the soul into separate faculties, we have held that in all action, whether done under the influence of

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'passion,' 'habit,' 'reason' or 'deliberate will,' the 'cause' of the action is ultimately always the same—the direction of the self towards the realization of an idea; and only upon such a view can we defend the belief in moral responsibility.

Let us begin the investigation of our present subject by bringing out as clearly as possible the essential features of Desire.

*Desire.* In our previous account of desire and will 118-2 we have seen that a 'motive'—the cause of action, or the object of desire—is an ideal or contemplated situation to be realized by effort. That is to say, intellectual activity is a condition of desire so far as it is characteristic of desire to be directed to objects. By 121-3 desire we do not mean a mere *want* such as a feeling of hunger. We mean the tendency to realize an 'object' in the proper sense. Hunger is not and does not account for the desire; for the hunger may exist without the desire, and the desire, in certain types of men, without the hunger. The hunger is but the 'occasion' on which a self-conscious agent acts as he deems best.

We have said that the desire for food may exist 126 without the feeling of hunger, and this draws attention to the important fact that the desires which are of most concern in the life of the civilized and educated human being may not depend directly upon animal susceptibility at all; the susceptibilities in which they originate being such as have arisen through the conduct, institutions and observances created by self-conscious agents themselves. Problems of conduct, momentous choices are not generally concerned with whether we shall eat or clothe ourselves, but whether we shall lie to avoid the unpleasant social consequences of truth-telling, whether we shall slay to preserve

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honour—most of the circumstances and solicitations, with reference to which the decision is to be made, being brought about by the action of intelligent agents in an organized community.

127-8 As a further evidence of the action of self-consciousness in constituting desire, we have to notice that desires do not arise in us atomically, each one self-contained and unaffected by the others. Any given desire arises within a complex situation and as related to other desires of the self; and because the self is a unity, it is able to appreciate the effect of satisfying any one interest on the future circumstances in which it will have to act. From this ability to hold past, present and future before himself in one consciousness, the self-conscious subject has the notion of satisfaction for 'self-as-a-whole.' This does not mean that he only desires particular things as parts of a 'general happiness' antecedently desired. Desires for particular things—desires and tendencies terminating, as Butler says, in their several objects—are implied in the 'desire for general happiness.' Self Love in general would have nothing to work upon did we not love something in particular. But, granting all this, the point we are at the moment stressing is that these various interests of the self are all *its* interests, all interests of an intelligent being; and the fact that it can regard them all as its own, prevents its wholly identifying its happiness with any single one of them. The desire which is seen to have consequences which render possible a further satisfaction is by that fact strengthened; the desire which is seen to carry disastrous consequences for some future project is by that very fact weakened. Indeed many desires for particular things actually originate through seeing that they are

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essential means to the realization of some antecedently desired end. Desires, then, are not isolated units. They have their bond of union in the single self-conscious agent. In all desire it is the man himself who is desiring.

*Desire and Will.* Recognition of the possibility of 137  
"conflict of desires" brings us to what is often called  
the problem of the relation between desire and will.  
A man is often faced with the necessity of choosing  
between two lines of action. To take our old example,  
Esau is faced with the necessity of choosing between  
retaining his birthright as the acknowledged leader  
of the clan on his father's death, and satisfying present  
hunger with the mess of pottage. We often describe  
the situation by saying that, because he desires but  
cannot have both, there arises in him a conflict of  
desires. Now what exactly do we mean by a 'conflict 138  
of desires'? Do we imply that these two desires fight  
it out, and that the winning one moves the man to  
act? Is it really true that the 'desires' which have  
'fought' with each other before action takes place are  
desires in the same sense as the desire which 'wins'  
and becomes the actual motive to action? We shall  
try to show that such an account of the matter is  
misleading. The conception of personified desires  
waging war in the soul, and the victor seizing control  
of the state, is an altogether false representation of what  
actually takes place when we 'make up our minds';  
because the desires which conflict before action are  
different in character from that which ultimately moves  
to action.

Take a concrete situation. A woman goes to choose, 139  
say, a table for her drawing-room. In the warehouse 143  
145

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she inspects various examples of the sort of thing she wants, selecting, say, two—a richly carved one and a severely simple one—for most serious consideration. The final choice is difficult to make, for, considered in themselves, both are sufficiently beautiful or rare to excite her acquisitive tendencies. She covets but cannot have both. Let us call these two psychological reactions to the two tables '*inclinations*.' Which of the two inclinations will the woman follow? If we may discount, for purposes of philosophical analysis, the opinion of the harassed assistant attending her, we may say that she 'makes up her mind' by considering *what will be involved* in satisfying either. She considers these two inclinations in their bearing upon other inclinations she has, chief of which may be taste for a harmoniously furnished room. The room is in fact of such a shape, and is in actual fact now furnished in such and such a manner. She sees that the carved table, rather than the plain one, will harmonize with her general scheme; she therefore makes up her mind to have it. Now this choice—the 'yielding to the wish or inclination' for the carved table—is something quite different from the 'inclination for the carved table' or the 'inclination for the plain table'; and the resolve or choice she has made has probably nothing at all to do with the *strength* of either inclination. Assuming both to be equal in strength, the final choice will centre on the object which gives most satisfaction to other inclinations (relating to price, utility, durability, etc.) and best harmonizes with the actual present facts (the shape and furnishings of the room). The inclination which fits most harmoniously into a universe of possible satisfactions is the one which the woman resolves to realize. Because



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the object of this inclination will fit the context as the other would not, it becomes elevated from a mere 'object of inclination' to the position of a 'motive.' It becomes an element in the concept of a total good.

We have, of course, been taking it for granted that a genuine choice between alternatives has taken place. Of course the woman may not have balanced the one inclination against the other at all. The mere 'floating idea' of possessing the plain table may only have passed through her mind as she wrote out her cheque for the other one. She may simply have taken without hesitation the steps to realize an immediate inclination. But then there would have been no 'conflict of desires,' and it is the case of conflict which we are discussing. Where there is conflict and choice, the choice is made by fitting one of the floating inclinations into a complex of floating inclinations and finding logical contact with present fact. The difference, then, between a 'pursued end' and an 'inclination' is a difference due to the action of thinking upon the 'inclining,' 'attracting' or 'soliciting' idea. It is wholly inappropriate to speak of the difference as one of *strength*. The strength of the inclination can only mean—unless we are reading into 'strength' that 'conviction of conformity to context' which is supplied by thought—the appeal of the idea to which we feel inclined.

The instance we have taken may not be very good for showing the minor place taken by strength of inclination in determining choice, for we presupposed that, considered in themselves, the two inclinations were about equal in strength. But let us take another example. Suppose I have promised to deliver, tomorrow evening, a lecture to a literary society, and then discover that on the same evening, and on that evening

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only, a play which I am desperately anxious to see is to be performed. I regret having made the promise. The inclination to what I *might* be doing is far more powerful than the inclination aroused by the thought of what I *shall* probably be doing tomorrow. Could the past be blotted out, and had I the choice of yesterday over again, I feel certain I should have chosen differently. And yet I deliberately prepare to do that to which I am less strongly inclined. Today I sit down to write my lecture, I look up trains, return the theatre tickets, and generally set in motion a chain of events which, I feel confident, will naturally lead to my doing tomorrow that which I feel less inclined to do. Why? Because strength of present inclination has nothing much to do with how I act. That to which, in itself and as a mere floating idea, I feel most violently inclined, can yet find no contact with the circumstances (the fact of my promise) in which I am actually placed, nor with the goods (the keeping of faith, the increase of interest in philosophical studies) which do have an intelligible connection with those circumstances. My strongest inclination will not fit into the context of fact and will not harmonize with other inclinations. It cannot, for that reason, be erected into a motive for an intelligent agent.

It may, of course, be replied that the strongest inclination is not, in this case, the inclination to see the play, but the inclination to keep faith or to increase philosophical study. But even if this be so, it does not affect the point of the argument. The conflict we were considering was between lecturing and going to the theatre on this particular evening. The inclination to the latter is stronger, but the former is the one actually willed, just because the former does and the

## *Intellect and Will*

latter does not find a place in a wider context of inclinations and present facts. What we are denying is the view that man's conative life is simply a collection of 'conative tendencies' or 'desires,' and that the 'strongest desire,' at any given moment, is what moves to action.

Once the inappropriateness of describing the motive 141  
as the strongest of competing desires is seen, philosophers  
often try to explain the fact of choice as involving the  
opposition of will and desire. Certainly this is a more  
adequate account than the one of which we have just  
disposed, for it takes note of the distinction we have  
made between competing 'inclinations' and ultimate  
'motive.' But even the distinction between desire and  
will—as conceived at any rate by many of its inter-  
preters—is not quite satisfactory. We do not wish to  
become involved in quibbles about the use of words,  
but more than the meaning of words is at stake when,  
e g., Kant uses the distinction between will and desire 144  
to explain the difference between virtue and vice. 147  
It is said that the morally good action is that which we  
can really will, while the evil action is due to following  
mere desire. The criticism of such a doctrine is that we  
not only desire but will that act to which moral  
censure attaches, and we desire as well as will to do  
good to our neighbour when we renounce something  
for his advantage. In all conduct for which we can be  
held responsible precisely the same psychological  
factors are involved. An ideal situation is contem-  
plated and related to a context of purposes and present  
fact; and the resolve, act of will, the following of  
desire—name it as you please—consists in the effort  
to realize this idea.

The commonly accepted distinction between will 142

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and desire is further apt to mislead, because will is said to be the choice made by the self between conflicting desires, or following upon such a conflict. This view leads to the awkward conclusion that where there is no previous conflict there can be no exercise of will (and therefore no virtue?). Surely it is just the mark of the fixed will and settled disposition that it moves to its goal without any apparent conflict at all.

We are not here merely suggesting errors which might arise from a commonly accepted view of the distinction between will and desire; we are referring to errors which actually have been associated with that view because the distinction has been regarded as one of 'faculties' in the man, either of which may 'lead him to action.' Such an opposition has no justification in psychological fact, and it is not what we mean by the distinction between motive and inclination. If we equate will with motive and desire with inclination, it will be obvious that a man never does, nor indeed can he, act on mere inclination or desire, either as morally good or as morally evil. Inclination is not a motive. The motive is '*inclination as related by intelligent agent to other inclinations and present fact.*' Again, if there is a clear distinction between will and desire, as separate faculties, then 'will' is not what we mean by 'motive,' for motive cannot come into being without inclination. It is not true that we can act *either* by inclination *or* by motive. We act by motive, which is the successful placing of an inclination in a complex of purposes logically connected to present fact. If, then, we are to use the terms 'desire' and 'will' to indicate the distinction between those ideas which solicit or attract, and the idea which we ultimately aim at

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realizing, we shall have to say that acts are always *willed* acts (whatever their moral character may be); and a willed act is what supervenes upon the successful relating of a desire to a context of purposes and present facts. For ourselves, however, we prefer to use the terms will and desire as practically synonymous, drawing a distinction between them and mere 'inclinations' or 'solicitations.'

*Desire or Will, and Intellect.* We turn now to the more difficult task of exhibiting the relation of thinking to practice, or desire and will to intellect. When, within the practical aspect of man's being, there is such a tendency to distinguish various 'faculties of action,' we may expect strong opposition to any suggestion that the practical and the speculative 'faculties' are one. Yet they are one, or, at most, different aspects of the one self-conscious activity.

It is true that many of the great moral philosophers 129 have actually or apparently countenanced the sharp separation of intellect and will. Amongst them may be reckoned Kant; but it is not easy to determine how far Kant did sanction it. He distinguished between desire and reason, but he also appears to have identified will and practical reason; so that the unity he took away with the one hand he returned with the other, thus showing how hard it is to make the separation final. But we do not require to rely on any interpretation of Kant to find support for the distinction between intellectual and practical activity. It is one which is so taken for granted that the onus of proof seems to be placed on those who deny rather than upon those who assert it. Is the distinction not plain to everyday experience? Are there no weak-willed geniuses, no

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clever scoundrels, no sincere but intellectually dull men in the world?

130; There certainly are clever scoundrels and innocent  
& dunces; but the question is what relation of intellect  
77-9 to will is implied in these facts. Will and intellect are  
not synonymous terms, certainly; otherwise we should  
not attempt to distinguish between them. But they  
stand only for aspects of the one self-conscious activity.  
Aspects are not separable; the one cannot exist without  
the other.

31-3 If we consider Will or Desire (taking the two terms  
here as synonymous), we may say that it is just the com-  
plement of Intellect. Will strives to give factual existence  
to the ideal, and understanding strives to give ideal  
existence to the actual. Will endeavours to give the  
subjectively existing a coherent place in the objectively  
existent. Intellect endeavours to give the objectively  
existing a coherent place in the subjective system of  
ideas. But in case these large statements savour too  
much of the airy grandiose, perhaps we had better  
condescend upon particulars and justify our claim to  
be interested in psychological facts and in the proper  
delineation of their real character.

134-5 We have said that in all understanding desire is  
implied. Can this doctrine be maintained? If I am  
sitting thinking about my holiday of a few years ago,  
does it follow that I am willing? I seem to be doing  
nothing—nothing but thinking. Well, it all depends  
upon what is meant by 'thinking.' Am I really thinking,  
or is it merely the case that a train of associated ideas  
is passing through my mind? The difference between  
the two is considerable. The mere association of ideas  
differs from thinking as much as mere inclination differs  
from an act of will. In the one there is no deliberate

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direction of the mind; in the other there is. I may 'think' or imagine myself as in a boat on the Firth of Clyde; but if this imagining is simply idle contemplation of a picture or succession of pictures, it is not thinking, but the mere presence of an ideal situation or situations. It is *thinking*, we say, which involves will and desire. Supposing that, imagining myself in that boat in a crowded harbour, I contemplate myself as attempting to get away from the anchorage in a seamanlike fashion against head-wind and contrary tide. I consider, as a problem, how I should go about it, trying to relate object (end), situation and means to each other—then I am thinking, and not merely entertaining imaginations or associating ideas.

But if that is thinking, and if all thinking involves will, how is it that no practical result has followed? Why am I still sitting here in a chair at home in precisely the same situation as before I began thinking? The answer to this difficulty involves appreciation of the distinction between 'resolve' and 'overt act.' Both resolve and overt act are elements in the act of will; and, necessarily bound up with my thinking, there was resolve; but there was no overt act, because the thinking stopped short of establishing a connection between the object (end) and present fact. My thinking was confined to an assumed or imagined fact, namely the assumed fact of my being in the boat, and the relating of this assumed fact to a certain end, namely the getting away from the anchorage. Assuming that fact, there was an inclination to leave; and the thinking was concentrated round the attempt to relate this inclination to the assumed fact, thus constituting an intellectual problem which, when *solved*, carried with it *resolve*. The intellectual *solution* which resulted from

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the thinking was the obverse side of the practical *resolution* to 'follow the logic of the situation.' There was will and desire in the sense in which will and desire are involved in any resolution—in the sense, e.g., in which they are involved in my 'making up my mind' to continue the second part of this book when I have finished this chapter. But the circumstance to which the resolve is relevant is not a *present* circumstance. It is not actual, and overt act involves a successful intellectual effort to relate the desired object to present fact. Where the intellect does not establish this logical bridge, the element of will stops at the point where the thinking has stopped—namely in postulating an ideal or imaginary set of circumstances. As *resolution* is the will-aspect of *solution*, so *overt act* is the will aspect of establishing connection with *present fact*. If the assumed or ideal circumstances ever become fact through any cause, then the resolution will be translated into overt act.

It is not generally recognized how much this element of resolution apart from overt act is found in acts of will which superficially are all overt action. It enters into the playing of a game such as golf. The 'follow-through' is part of the act of will when the stroke commences, but it does not become overt act until the descent of the club and the striking of the ball bring into existence the precise circumstances which render it appropriate. Yet we do not say there have been many acts of will in making the stroke; though if we cared we could probably say so.

- 136 It is clear, then, that we cannot describe an act of will without bringing intellect into the description, and we cannot describe an act of real thinking without implying the operation of will and desire. If I have



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an inclination to a thing, that inclination must be described as the entertaining of a floating ideal situation. I have to describe an act of will as the resolution or overt act accompanying the apprehension of a logical connection between inclination, other purposes, and assumed or actually present fact. I have to describe thinking as an intellectual *activity*—as an effort after the solution of a problem—as the attempt to establish connection between assumed or perceived fact and desired object. It is a single subject which desires in all our desiring, thinks in all our thinking, desires in all our thinking and thinks in all our desiring.

This theory is very plausible, it may be said—until 150-2 we come to the test of actual life; and on that test it falls to the ground. In spite of all finely spun and ingenious argument, is it not quite patent, when all is said and done, that willing and thinking are absolutely different? Does a hard-pressed creditor suppose that the act of willing to pay the debt owing to him is the same as thinking about it? To this we must reply that it depends upon what the thinking refers to. The act of willing to pay the debt is not the same as thinking about going for a holiday, nor is it the same as merely entertaining the floating idea of oneself as paying the debt; for, in the former case, the thinking does not have the debt as its object, and, in the latter, it is not thinking which is taking place at all. But if I do not merely entertain the floating idea, if I really try to relate it to other entertained purposes and actual circumstances—take out my account books and see how this idea would fit into the system—an act of will necessarily follows, either the resolve to pay or the resolve not to pay. Our contention is not that every floating idea is willed, nor that every floating idea which we try to

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relate to other purposes and present facts will be able to *find* a place in that system, and hence become a motive to action. We only contend that whatever idea does find a place will become a motive to action. The idea of paying the debt may not be successful in finding a place; but thinking about it, if the thinking is carried through to the end, will result in the idea being definitely related or definitely rejected in favour of some other. In either case there is an act of will—the resolve to pay, or the resolve to do something else. The act of will is not simply preceded by thinking, or partly thinking. It is thinking through and through; just as thinking is willing through and through.

148 Bearing all this in mind, we can now return some answer to the assertion that, because there are in the world clever scoundrels and innocent dunces, thinking and willing must be expressions of distinct faculties. To the statement of fact perhaps a qualification should be added—to the effect that really great achievements in science, art and philosophy are hardly reached by men of low moral character. The thinker who is to any great extent moved by personal ambition is inclined to fall short of what his powers could have achieved had he been more single-minded and dedicated to his work.

149 But leaving aside this necessary qualification, how far does the admitted discrepancy between moral altitude and intellectual power in some men affect our contention as to the relation of understanding and will? The things a clever man thinks about are not necessarily moral matters, and the will he exhibits must always relate to the things he thinks about. To think habitually about ways of destroying life does not involve a will directed to the preservation and

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enrichment of life, but only a will to the destruction of it. Much thinking does not imply, necessarily, much moral will, but only much will. What would be very surprising, however, would be to find that the 'good dunce' was a better man than the man of greater intellectual powers who habitually thought about the same ends as does the good dunce. If the real implications of all those admitted facts which are brought forward as refutations of the theory here defended be thought out with sufficient care, they will be found to support rather than stand in opposition to its main contentions.

To bring this discussion to a close; will and intellect, 153  
it is contended, are inseparable aspects of a single activity of a self-conscious subject—a being who is a 'free cause' inasmuch as he is a reproduction of the one eternal self-consciousness.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MEANING OF "GOOD" AND OF "MORAL GOOD"

The chief purpose of the foregoing chapters has been to clear away accumulated misconceptions regarding human nature; and we are now in a position to deal with the central subject of this work—the principles of morals. The distinction which lies at the root of every moral judgment, and the central fact to be explained by any system of ethics, is the distinction between moral good and evil—the distinction between the good and the bad will; and our theory of will and desire makes it clear that we cannot explain this opposition by assuming two separate ‘faculties of action’—desire and will, or desire and reason. The psychological factors in *every* act, whether it be virtuous or vicious, are the same. In all voluntary conduct, a man presents to himself, as the object of his will, an idea of some state the realization of which will give him satisfaction; in other words, a state which he takes to be *good*. It is not true that, while the virtuous man aims at the ‘good,’ the vicious man does not. Both regard the ends they seek as good—as capable of giving satisfaction to the self. 154

Wherein, then, does the distinction between the good and the bad will rest? Obviously, as it does not rest on any distinction of subjective faculties involved in the voluntary activity, it must rest on a distinction of *objects* pursued. The good man must be good because he pursues an object or type of object A, and the bad man is bad because he pursues an object or type of

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object B. The good will, that is, has to be defined in terms of the object pursued. The object is not good because a will antecedently good pursues it. The will is good because it pursues an object antecedently taken to be good.

Now as soon as we put the point like this, we see how confusion of language is apt to make a perfectly true doctrine appear as riddled with self-contradictions. We have just said that the will is good because it pursues an object antecedently taken to be good, implying that a will is bad so far as it pursues an object antecedently taken to be bad. But we have previously said that in *all* voluntary action, bad as well as good, the object of will is taken to be good. The apparent contradiction here, however, is due to our failure to distinguish two senses of the word 'good' ('good' as = 'virtuous', and 'good' as = 'valuable'), and to distinguish degrees of value (what satisfies one interest may frustrate a greater interest). Drawing these distinctions we can now state our view so as to avoid confusion. In all voluntary action, whether virtuous or vicious, a man aims at something he takes to be good or valuable, as satisfying some interest. The distinction between the virtuous and the vicious man rests in a distinction of objects taken to be good. The virtuous man pursues an object or type of object antecedently judged to be a greater good, and the vicious man pursues an object antecedently judged (not necessarily judged by him) to be a lesser good.

Let us try to define more fully these terms 'value' and 'virtue.' What exactly do they mean, and to what in experience do they correspond?

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A.—We shall take first the term 'good' or 'value' 171 and see if we cannot explain its meaning so that, when used, it will conjure up a significant and identical conception in all men. By calling a thing 'good,' we mean that it is an object possessed of such a quality, or character, that it satisfies some need, interest or desire. And hence we define the quality 'good' as "that which satisfies a desire or interest of a subject." We call objects good because we believe that they will satisfy some interest. If they do satisfy, we have judged truly. They are good. If they do not satisfy, we have judged erroneously, and they are *not* good or have no value.

This theory of value will be challenged from two sides; first, by the Hedonist who says the good is not to be defined as 'what satisfies desire,' but as 'pleasure'; and, secondly, by those who assert that good is a quality pertaining to objects quite apart from their relation to a desiring subject. To deal first with Hedonism: without, at the moment, entering on the question whether Hedonism is right in saying we all aim at pleasure and at nothing but pleasure; even if the Hedonist were correct, the truth of his doctrine would not prove ours false; for to say we all aim at pleasure is to point out *that which* we desire or aim at—that object which alone *is* good, or which alone satisfies our interest. But how does this affect the contention that in calling pleasure good we *mean* that it is that which will satisfy desire or interest? Not at all. We are defining the quality 'good.' The Hedonist is saying what alone (in his opinion) *has* this quality, namely pleasure. We are defining the quality possessed by the object; the Hedonist is indicating the object which, in his opinion, alone possesses this quality.

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The second criticism of our doctrine is much more relevant to what the doctrine maintains. It is to the effect that, by defining 'good' as that in an object which renders it capable of satisfying an interest, we are putting the cart before the horse. Whereas we say men attribute 'goodness' to objects because they believe such objects will satisfy some desire or interest, the critic asserts that we desire or are interested in objects because we see them to be good. 'Goodness' or 'value,' the critic proceeds, is an objective quality like any primary or secondary quality. It is in the object itself, and does not depend for its existence on the relation of that object to a subject. Now the answer to this is that even primary and secondary qualities do not belong to objects apart from their relation to the knowing subject. At least we can not prove that they do, and it is most reasonable to argue that they do not. The green-ness of the grass is a quality the grass takes on when brought into relation with a subject of such and such a nature. Certainly, the nature of the grass is also a factor in determining what qualities or appearances it will assume; for all things do not have the same qualities. But the character of the thing is not enough to determine what its appearances shall be. That also depends partly on the sort of subject to whom the thing appears. Certainly, also, we say, it is the grass which *has* the quality. We are attributing the quality to *it*, and not to our eyes or brains or minds; but that is because we are a *constant* factor in our perception of *changing* things, and hence we attribute the quality to the thing itself, because its nature makes the difference between this perception and other perceptions. It remains true, however, that qualities in *general* (and hence this quality in particular) are

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conditioned by the constant subject. We may say, if we like, that qualities are of objects subjectively conditioned. The same holds with regard to tertiary qualities such as 'beauty' and 'good.' It is to the thing itself we attribute the beauty or value, because the nature of the subject is a constant factor or term in the relationship, and things are changing. But the desiring subject, while a *constant* factor, is a constant *factor* in the relationship; and, but for his having purposes and desires, no such predicate as 'good' would be attached to the thing. Goodness is a quality of things subjectively conditioned; and, in calling a thing good, we mean to assert that it satisfies some interest or desire of a subject.

B.—So far we have been concerned with the meaning of good in general, or value. But we also speak of a good man and a good will, meaning *virtuous* or *morally good*. What exactly do we mean by virtue, here? We certainly do not apply the term 'virtuous' or 'morally good' to things like good houses, rivers, etc. (to which we do attribute goodness or value), but only to purposive or self-conscious agents. Virtue or moral goodness, then, pertains to subjects. And, further, it will be admitted by all, we apply the term to their wills, or at least to their actions. A man is called virtuous or vicious so far as he wills or acts in certain ways—so far as he wills to produce, or actually produces, a certain state of affairs in the world of fact or reality. The type of action which is made subject to moral praise or blame is, e.g., the removal of a fence erected by a neighbour, the striking of another person, or the dismissal of an employee.

But we must define more accurately the criterion we use in distinguishing between virtue and vice. Do



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we judge by actual effects produced, or by intention, or by motive?

The most obvious answer would seem to be that we judge by actual effects. It is wrong or vicious, we may say, to remove a neighbour's fence, because it causes an injury to him, leaving a passage for your cattle into his field of hay. Let us, then, consider carefully the ways in which we judge the effects of actions, and see if we can find amongst these the moral judgment.

In the first place, it has to be noted that many actual effects never come up for judgment at all. If I remove my neighbour's fence, my act has millions of effects, direct and indirect. It allows passage to my cattle; the energy I have used up affects the temperature of the atmosphere; removing the posts disturbs earth-worms, etc.; but we never attend to many such effects. So it is plain that we do not judge the morality of the act by *all* its effects. We select some of these effects, and judge the action by them. Thus we may pass judgment on action as *useful* or *good-as-means*. This type of judgment selects some one or limited number of effects which are *desired*. They are not necessarily desired by the agent (though they *may* be). All that is implied is that they are desired by *some one*. The action is judged useful or good-as-means, then, if it actually produces this desired end or good. It is irrelevant whether the production of it is accidental or not. The agent may not have intended it, or he may have been trying to prevent it; but so long as *some one* desired it, then the means actually producing it are judged to have been useful or good-as-means.

But again—still dealing with actual effects—we may judge action as 'correct' or 'technically right.' This

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implies that the *agent* who produced the effect *aimed* at producing it. He has had an end in view and selected what he regarded as a means to it. If the 'means' actually *is* a means to or produces the end, then his act is judged technically right or correct or skilful.

So much for the judgments concerned with actual 155 effects. But the moral judgment relates to intention or motive rather than to actual effects. A man acts in such and such a way, and such and such an actual result is produced. We may say to him: "Did you *mean* to do that? Did you *aim* at producing that result? If you did, your action was wrong. If you did not, it may not have been. It all depends on what you *aimed* at." The judgment, here, is not on actual effects but upon intention or motive, or intended effects, or effects aimed at; and, no matter what the effects are (whether they are the ones the man desired to produce or not—no matter whether they are useful to himself and injurious to others or *vice versa*), the judgment is solely upon the man's intention or *motive*. And if we distinguish between proximate intention and remote motive, we must say that the moral judgment refers ultimately to motive.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, the effects are not irrelevant. For a motive 291 or object of will is, after all, "the idea of a certain state to be realized by effort." The moral *act* never leaves effects out of consideration, for the effects to be produced are an essential part of the motive. But the 292 moral *judgment* on a man's act refers not to the effects actually produced, but to the effects intended, even though the 'intention' has miscarried.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note D.

<sup>2</sup> So far as the *general* development of Green's ethical position is concerned, this is a sufficiently accurate statement of his view

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Now, if we judge a man morally good or bad according to the effects he *intended* to produce; or, in the last analysis, according to the dominant motive behind his particular intentions (and not according to the *actual* effects he produces), does not this mean that the moral judgment is passed on the character or will of the man, and not on the *objects* of his will? How, then, can we reconcile this with the statement that we judge a man morally according to the objects he pursues?

The whole position may be put in the following way. We value certain objects. All objects are good so far as they satisfy an interest. But the value or goodness of some objects is very limited in the sense that they satisfy only a passing interest; whereas other objects satisfy a 'greater or more permanent interest. We say the former are good, and the latter *better*. The former have less, and the latter have greater value. If, in addition, the object of lesser value is such that the pursuit of it precludes the pursuit of the greater, we say that the former is, *on the whole*, bad. Looked at in itself, and with reference only to the interest it satisfies, we say it is good. But looked at with reference to self as a whole, its conflicting with a greater good makes it undesirable or dis-valuable or bad—just as the little finger of the hand has in itself length or extendedness, but, compared with other fingers, it is *short*, and they are long compared with it.

Having arranged our good things or desirable objects of the relation of moral judgment to effects and motive. At the same time, his theory (expounded in our next chapter) that the object of the good will is the "production of the good will itself" seems to bring motives and actual effects into very intimate relation, and to give a peculiar turn to Green's view of the relation of moral judgment to actual effect. See Appendix, Note D.

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in a scale of goodness, or, at least, having separated the obviously better from the obviously worse, we judge a man morally according to what good he aims at. He is virtuous if he pursues the former and vicious if he pursues the latter.

We are now in a position to re-affirm our statement at the opening of this chapter: In all voluntary or morally imputable conduct, a person, whether we judge him virtuous or vicious, pursues what he presents to himself as a good. It is, therefore, in the specific differences of the objects willed that we have to find the distinction between the virtuous and vicious man, or morally good and bad will.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MORAL IDEAL

- 156 What, then, is the difference between the object of the good and the object of the bad will? What is the moral end, or the object pursued by the moral man? In the first place, the moral good must conform to the generic  
171 definition of 'good': it must relate itself to interests of a subject; hence, by mere formal deduction, we can say that moral good must be that which satisfies a moral agent. This is not a circular argument. If there is a moral good, it must be that which satisfies a moral agent; for good *means* that which satisfies desire or interest of a subject.

But, of course, this formal inference adds nothing concrete to our conception of moral good; and we want more definite content for our idea of the moral end. It can be somewhat further determined by referring back to the distinction between good and better. An object is good so far as it satisfies some interest; it is better if it satisfies a greater or more permanent interest; and a moral agent being a unitary self, obviously the moral good must satisfy the *self*, and not merely one interest in possible conflict with others. The moral good, then, is to be identified with full self-satisfaction. And some moralists might rest content with saying that the moral good is the 'better' as distinct from the merely 'good.' But in our metaphysical analysis<sup>1</sup> of the relation of will and desire to the spiritual principle in reality, we have seen that the distinction between good and better implies the notion

<sup>1</sup> Pages 61 ff.

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of a Best. The action of a self-conscious agent is action for ends, and progress from a merely good to a better state implies the notion of a Best. This best is our complete self-perfection, and hence what will satisfy the moral agent is not merely the better but the *Best*. The moral good, then, is a name for true or absolute good. Thus, still moving in the realm of merely formal definition, and collecting the significance of previously established truths, we are able to say that moral good is the absolute good or Best, and that it is the pursuit of this Best which is the distinctive characteristic of the moral will.

This being the *formal* character of the moral good, this being the character it must necessarily have, what is the *content* of the good? What is that object or end which possesses this character?

Before attempting to answer this question, we have 172;  
to state quite emphatically that, in one sense, it is not & 176  
the moral philosopher, as such, who can provide an answer, but only the man actually living the morally good life. If it so happens that any particular moral philosopher can give a better answer than anyone else, it is not primarily because he is a philosopher, but because he is a man of great practical moral insight.<sup>1</sup>

But of course the moral philosopher has the same 284  
function here as in all ethical questions. He can study the ideals men entertain and the ends they pursue; and he can exhibit and describe the general character of those ideals, setting out the principal features, if any, common to all; and the analysis he makes of this range of moral phenomena may often be practically suggestive to teachers and reformers.

<sup>1</sup> Compare "Introduction," p. 30, note; and Chapter IX.

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When philosophy embarks upon this task of reflection upon moral ideals actually cherished, it finds that, explicitly or implicitly operative in the mind of the moral agent, is the idea of an end (*a*) which is absolute, taking precedence of all other ends; (*b*) which is a common good—a good which can be shared by a society of which he forms part; and (*c*) that the more clearly and concretely it comes before the mind, the more is this absolute, common good seen to be the good will itself or the ‘perfection’ of personal agents

In the following paragraphs we shall attempt to justify this characterization of the moral end. We have already seen that any good which is to satisfy a unitary self-conscious agent is contemplated as complete and absolute; and that the moral consciousness envisages  
199 such an end is only to be expected. But it may seem difficult to understand how this ideal of personal good can also be an ideal of social good. And yet unless it is, it cannot be what we understand by a moral ideal; for a moral ideal is social through and through  
190 How, then, can the ideal be both personal and social? Well, we have to remember that the ideal must satisfy all the fundamental interests of the agent; and amongst those interests the interest in other persons is quite obvious. Even in the most primitive state of human society—to make no reference to the bonds between parent and offspring, and the protective office of older males amongst animals—individuals are affected by interest in other persons’ welfare. The good a man desires for himself is one which he demands that they also share.

200-1 This interest in others is such that, to the man possessing it, those who are its objects are ‘ends in themselves’ in the same sense as he is an end to him-

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self; or we may say that their satisfaction is included in the conception of that at which he aims, namely his own satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> This interest in other persons as persons is an interest which cannot be developed from any purely personal, non-social interest. Only from a community of persons cherishing each other's welfare could society, as we know it, develop. Only 202 5 from the pursuit of a common good could a system of law prescribing mutual rights and duties arise; for it is this notion which underlies equally moral and legal right and duties. Simple fear could not create respect for the authority of the law; and, as history has often demonstrated, law which proves false to its primary purpose and becomes antagonistic to the common good, is either modified by pressure of public opinion, or provokes a destructive revolution. No matter what force is committed to the 'government,' no system of law has much chance of survival if it is not in some sense freely imposed by each member of the community on himself in conformity with a general good he is seeking.

Now when we speak of a notion of common good 206 as the basic idea in all community life, and the foundation of systems of rights and duties, we do not mean that this idea is *directly* implied in every particular assertion of right or duty. Obviously it is not. Legal rights and duties may be immoral. Laws may sometimes protect unfair privileges. But it remains true that such particular rights and duties could not long form the *bulk* of those sanctioned in the community. They are 'parasitic'—tolerated with a bad grace because it is not clear how they can be remedied without upsetting what in the system is conducive to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note E.



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general good. But at the core of the system the common good must lie. Further, just because men will claim such privileges as 'rights,' it shows that they do not always clearly recognize how rights and duties necessarily imply each other. They see that *their* rights imply duties for *others*; but not that the *possession* of rights implies the *submission* to corresponding duties. Hence the one-sided claims made by privileged classes, the distinction of slave and slave-owner, etc. It has indeed been thought, e.g. by the Greeks and other civilized peoples, that such distinctions are the basis of all "tolerable social life," whereas it is more true to say that social life ends at the point where those distinctions arise. The outcast or slave is, after all, not a member of the society or a citizen. He is a tool it employs. The real society is composed of the caste with sufficiently strong cohesion and organization to prevent cohesion amongst the human tools, and thus prevent their assertion of a claim to participate in the common good. Wherever a real *social* bond exists, the conception of a common good is operative, and the emancipation of slaves is but the practically logical consequence of recognizing personality in the slave—recognizing his ability and claim to share in the common good.

The very reflection upon the implications of community life—that anyone capable of owing duties is capable of owning rights; and the almost inevitable tendency to give scope to these capabilities (strong selfish interest not intervening) once they are realized—is one of the main causes of the development of morality from ancient to modern times. Indeed the development of morality can be analysed into two main aspects; (*a*) the gradual extension of the range

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of persons who are recognized as having a claim to share in the common good, and (b) the consequent development in the notion of the common good itself. It will be convenient and appropriate to discuss the first of these aspects now.

### A EXPANSION OF AREA OVER WHICH 'COMMON GOOD' RECOGNIZED

At first, the range of persons who are deemed capable of or entitled to a share in the common good is narrow—the members of the family or tribe—and 'outsiders' are deemed to have no rights or claims. But as experience grows and reflection deepens, the range becomes wider. Without there being necessarily any change in 207 the strength of the feeling of duty, the conception of duty becomes larger and more complex as the answer to the question "Who is my neighbour?" includes more and more persons, until it passes all bounds of political or racial unity and comes to include humanity itself. We need not, in a partisan spirit, enter into the 208-9 question as to how much of the modern humanitarian ideal was due to Roman jurists, Greek philosophers and Christian teachers respectively; and it is usually a partisan spirit which makes special claim to have brought about what is, after all, but a natural development of the human spirit itself. Given the idea of a common good, and add to it increasing diplomatic and economic contact, and the idea of universal humanity will naturally begin to take shape in the reflective mind. We might even say that what the historian has to explain is not the growth of this idea but the slowness of its growth once it has gained recognition, as e.g., the survival of slavery in a community whose

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separate national life is founded on that humanitarian principle.

- 210-2 'Humanitarianism' is not, as is so often suggested, a device for evading the duties of one's station. It is an ideal which, while deepening the bonds holding together members of a clan or city, refuses to see, as part of the true well-being of the city, any gain won at the expense of its honour and integrity. Properly viewed, the opposition between nationalist and internationalist is a false antithesis, neglecting the moral foundations common to the truly national and truly international sentiments alike. Nationalism, the struggle for freedom and self-government, for a consenting voice in questions of world policy and control of home affairs (unless we are to confound it with that jingoism which attempts to dictate to all other communities from an assumed right of natural superiority), is founded on claims of justice, and is a protest against external imposition of another's arbitrary will. And this same moral urge, which disrupts a corrupt empire, or wars against the domination of a caste or particular locality, finds its logical complement in internationalism. If the moral sense directs the struggle for liberty and equality, it will at the same time express itself in a desire for fraternity. The claim to be a person, with the rights and privileges of a person, implies also the recognition of those rights in others, in virtue of a common nature and ability to share in a common good. As the development from absolute monarchy or oligarchy to democracy implies both a deepening of the sense of common good and a deepening sense of each person as an end in himself;<sup>1</sup> so the democracy

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bury regards Socrates and Alexander the Great as representing two aspects of the development of a single principle (*History of Greece* (2nd edition), pp. 574 ff., and pp. 815-6).

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of nations shows a twofold aspect in its development,—a deepening sense of individuality in the separate nations, and a willingness to co-operate for a common good.

There are, of course, men who reject this view and regard the natural relation of individuals and states as one of mutual war. But the contrary idea is so generally embodied now in Christendom, and is the theme of so much thought and teaching, that the rejection of it argues, not “a realism with the courage to face hard facts,” but a spiritual myopia, or the adoption of a superficially plausible theory to excuse the retention of vested interests which a frank facing of social issues would show to be indefensible. The passionate outcry against the great Utilitarians, such as Bentham and Mill, who placed in the forefront of their ethical systems the principle that “each is to count as one, and none as more than one,” was due to this principle’s implications for certain privileges unfairly enjoyed. The Hedonistic psychology was made the point of attack, but that it was not the real objective is clear from the fact that the Hedonistic doctrine was embodied in several ‘respectable’ theological systems. Utilitarianism’s ‘fault’ was that it—even inconsistently with its Hedonistic assumptions perhaps—insisted on a practical recognition of the principle that the individual is an end in himself. 213-5

This attitude of the great Utilitarians is but a particular manifestation of the way in which the moral will is continuously working towards the conception and realization of a universal society. Organized society is a universal spirit individuating itself in particular persons in a community—a community of persons who can say ‘I’ and ‘Thou,’ and recognize claims and 216-7

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counter-claims. In early ages, the group of persons belonging to the 'common-wealth' is very limited, but it is gradually extended to include other groups and classes. There is no necessary limit of members or space. But the wider the fellowship (the more the individual members are removed in space and environmental conditions from each other), the more noticeable do the impediments become—ignorance and fear of the unknown or strange, leading to suspicion and armed peace. These barriers are, indeed, often broken in the first place, not by a recognition of 'common humanity,' but by the pressure of economic forces or imperial conquest (as in the case of colonization or the growth of the Roman power). But whatever the immediate cause of the more intimate contact between peoples, these causes such as economic pressure or conquest operate mainly as removing ignorance. Economic forces and imperial conquest do not create a wider society, but only bring about conditions in which common needs and common nature can be recognized. It is our 'better reason' or 'moral sense' which, operating in these circumstances, forges the bands of new and wider association.

### B. DEVELOPMENT IN THE IDEA OF THE 'COMMON GOOD'

218 So far we have been considering one factor in the development of morality: the recognition of a good as common, and the gradual extension of the range of persons conceived as sharing in it. But we have to notice now the other factor; how, with this gradual extension, there goes an enrichment of the content of the idea of the good itself.

219 If we take the conception of a mere succession of

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desires, it yields the conception of a mere succession of goods. But the very reflection on desires which reveals them to be desires of a unitary self, yields also a notion of 'self' as distinct from any or all of its particular desires; and there supervenes the notion of a possible satisfaction of self as a whole. Such an idea of good for the whole self is implied in the most elementary moral judgment; for, unless we could compare the relative values of two objects desired, there would be no basis for saying, when the two conflict, that one ought and the other ought not to be satisfied; and unless we had a notion of good for self as a whole, we could not see this conflict; or, if we could, we should regard it as irrelevant. 220

Amongst the earliest objects fitting this idea of 'good as a whole' is the well-being of the family, man regarding himself as somehow permanently living on in his children, after he himself is dead. If we ask why we presume to carry the family institution back to the most primitive times, we answer that we are only carrying it back as far as there can be a conception of a common good; and beyond that point (at the point where the notion of common good ceases to operate) we have got to a being who can make no claim to be our moral and spiritual ancestor; for, in the earliest stages of specifically *human* development, the rejection of any particular good is inspired by the idea of a permanent good which is at the same time a common good. This does not mean that to reasonable 'self-love' is due no moral approbation. It only means that the distinction of good for self and good for others has never entered into that idea of a true good which is the standard of moral judgment.<sup>1</sup> The 229-7 232

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note F.

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idea of a true good is an idea of satisfaction for a self which contemplates itself as abiding, but can only contemplate itself as such by identifying itself with some sort of society. This well-being a man certainly thinks of as his own; but that he should think of it as *exclusively* his own would be incompatible with the fact that it is only as living in a community that he can conceive himself as having permanent existence. His own personal well-being he thus presents to himself as a social well-being.

33-4 This conception of well-being leads to an ordering of life in which some permanent provision is made for the self-realization of self and others. A man's well-being or happiness consists in the successful pursuit of various interests which society has in general determined for him; and, when realized, these interests take their place as a contribution to an abiding social good, for the opposition of self and others is not relevant to the good which he makes his end. Recognizing their nature as like his own, he conceives their true happiness to be in the same direction as his own. As his interests belong to him only because he is a member of society, he ascribes like interests to others.

40-1 We have already seen that, in the earliest stages of specifically human history, the common good is conceived as the good or well-being of a family at least; and we have now to see how the notion of what this good is develops from a cruder to a more refined conception. The first idea of it will, so far as primitive man has any opportunity for reflection, appear as a stock of provision for maintaining life—food, clothing, a cave. But the provision for these needs cannot, even in the most primitive state, exhaust the demand in which it originates. With even temporary relief from

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the struggle to *live*, we come to have ends to which life itself is a mere *means*—the production of something of permanent value (as, e.g., in advanced civilization, the sacrifice of life in the interests of medicine or science), the activity and fruition of certain capacities. Reflection upon these capacities and interests gradually yields the notion of a spiritual as distinct from a merely material good. An interest arises, not simply in keeping the members of the family alive, but also in making them individuals of a certain kind or character. Upon the interest in the healthy animal there supervenes an interest in the healthy spirit. 242-3

Even if, at an early stage, these moral and spiritual virtues—honesty, bravery, skill—are considered chiefly as means to more material goods ('rewards' being promised to the righteous), there arises almost immediately a distinction between deserving prosperity and having prosperity. This distinction is itself the recognition of a spiritual as distinct from a material good, the former intrinsically better than the latter. When- 244-5  
ever this interest in merit becomes self-conscious, we & 19  
have reached the stage of recognizing in the good will itself the supreme good and ultimate object of human endeavour. The only true good is conceived as *being* good.

This process in the development of the notion of good is complementary to the process of enlarging the area of those coming under the common good. If it is a common good, it must be one which is not competitive—my gain must not involve your loss. And the only really non-competitive good is the universal will to be good, i.e., the settled disposition to make the most of humanity in one's own person and in those of others.



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- 286 We can now focus the results of this chapter on the question with which it began—what is the difference between the good and bad will; what is the object pursuit of which distinguishes the virtuous will from the vicious? We said that we can only answer this by reflecting on experience and by looking carefully at the actual pursuits of those whom we respect as good men. And from reflection upon and analysis of actual moral judgments and the history of men's moral ideals, we can draw the following conclusions: (*a*) The moral end is the absolute good. It is absolute in the sense of taking precedence of all others. (*b*) It is a common good. (*c*) The more we reflect upon practical life and the implications of the terms 'absolute' and 'common,' the more do we become convinced that the ultimate good is nothing other than the will to *be* good, or to attain to perfection of humanity for self and others.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MORAL IDEAL AS CONSERVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE

This chapter will explain its own title as we proceed. But before embarking on its main subject, we may justly be expected to pause and listen to an obvious criticism of the conclusions of the preceding chapter. The object of the good will has been defined as the good will; but can this really be accepted as a satisfactory conclusion? Have we not been misled into 194 arguing in a circle? We said the good will must be defined in relation to its object; but on being asked what this object is, we have replied that it is the good will. "The good will wills itself" or its own realization. This 'circle' is so obvious that many moralists have attempted to avoid it by taking the object of the good will to be something quite other than itself. Now, certainly, we can get out of the circle by making the good will a means to something other than itself; but 243 are we being true to the ordinary moral consciousness in so doing? We are not. All great moral teachers have emphasized the supremacy of virtue over all other goods; and the greatest of modern philosophers, 155 Kant, has set out as one of the clearest deliverances of the ordinary moral consciousness—as one of the primary facts from which all ethical theory starts—this same judgment that nothing is good without qualification but the good will.

The alternatives between which we have to choose are clear: (1) We may take the good will to aim at an ultimate end other than its own development, repudiating

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the judgment of the moral consciousness itself; or (2) we shall require to admit this 'circle.' To adopt the former alternative seems unreasonable. Ethical theory has no right to dictate ends. Its function is to theorize about the moral life; its data (the facts it theorizes about and tries to explain) are the actual judgments passed by the moral consciousness; and an essential fact about moral judgment is its regarding virtue as the supreme good—an end which takes precedence of all others.

172 Accepting this 'circle,' then, that the good will is the will directed to the production of the good will, let us see if we cannot remove the suggestion of 'viciousness' in the circle. What really arouses criticism is anything suggestive of circular *definition*—the defining the good will in terms of its object, and defining its object as what the good will wills, namely itself. Surely, it will be said, we must already know the *object* of the good will, if we have to explain what the good will is by reference to its object; or, if we can only say what the object is by referring it to the good will, we must already know what the good will is.

154 Now in earlier chapters it has been shown that all will, as will, is the same psychologically;<sup>1</sup> and that the distinction between the good and the bad will is to be found in the kind of object willed.<sup>2</sup> Hence, if the phrase "the good will" is to mean anything for us, we *ought* to be able to say something more definite about the object.

172; Actually, we can say something more. If this good  
195 will had not realized itself at all, nothing could be inferred about it. But the moral capacity is not by any means wholly unrealized; and, by reflecting on

<sup>1</sup> Pages 40 ff.; and 89 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Pages 105-6.

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its partial embodiments, we can form some at least negative conclusions about its complete realization. We cannot say in what exactly the complete good consists; and yet the conviction that such a perfect realization must be possible influences our conduct. Our effort after the 'better' implies the idea of an eternally existing Best; and it is the effort after this Best, starting from reflection upon its partial embodiments in social institutions, which gives the clue to its further embodiments. We do not fully know the Best. While we know *that* it is, we do not fully know *what* it is, for fully to know would be to have attained. But we know enough of it to take the step of doing the duty lying to our hand. The *doing*, as Carlyle says, will yield fuller knowledge, to the extent of setting the conditions which make the next duty clear. The extent to which one has fulfilled or fallen short of the ideal today will determine what, in particular, the fulfilling of it will entail tomorrow.

### A. THE CONSERVATIVE FUNCTION OF THE MORAL IDEAL

But, it may be asked, how can this mere idea *that* there is a Best, if we do not know *what* it is, give rise to a system of categorical imperatives and definite laws (moral and political), yielding our *actual* moral standards and inducing obedience to them? This question brings us to the discussion of the relation of the moral ideal to "the law"—to that system of rules and commands prescribing particular courses of action for members of the social organism. 192

We answer that such an ideal will operate as follows: It will keep before a man an object absolutely desirable, 193; & and yet not identified with any particular object of 196-7

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passing desire, but regulative of all satisfaction of particular desires. It will make a man impose upon himself rules which the wisdom and practical experience of his forefathers have discovered to be conducive to its attainment, even though such rules are in conflict with his immediate present inclination. If we ask *what* is commanded in these rules, the answer is to be found in the social institutions, laws and refined public conscience. For practical purposes we can *generally* regard as categorically imperative those recognized duties of the good workman, parent and citizen. But if, theoretically, we try to attach any "unconditional absoluteness" to any particular duty, we shall find that all duties are contingent upon and relative to circumstances. Any law or imperative commands performance of what is generally recognized in most circumstances to be a means to, and an expression of, the absolute unconditional good. But increasing insight and change of circumstances may involve change in the law which, professedly, is directed to achieving the unchanging good. The good is absolute and unconditioned, and it gives rise to *generally* binding rules; but they are not absolute and unconditional in the sense in which it is.

- 198 But, it may be said, our Categorical Imperative seems now to have too much, rather than too little content. We speak of its *generally* commanding. But what criterion can we use to distinguish the general from the exceptional? Or, still more, how can we discern our duty in extreme cases where no rule for behaviour exists? How can the same ideal be the source both of existing law and our obedience to it, and also of that advancing morality which stands as critic of those laws, gradually displacing them by higher and better ones?

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## B. THE MORAL IDEAL AND PROGRESS

Perhaps some answer can be given to this difficult question if we compare two types of character, the saint and the reformer—compare the man who, satisfied with the scheme of duties presented to him, strives to fulfil them perfectly; and the man who, rebelling against many so-called duties imposed on himself and his fellows, strives to alter the existing system. By the 'saint' is not meant the man who stresses conformity to external rules. He is the 'conscientious' man who, knowing the act to be vain without the spirit, tries to do the recognized duties in the proper spirit. The 'reformer' is a man who rejects many 'duties' commonly regarded as binding, and asserts many others not generally regarded as binding. How can the same ideal be operative in both saint and reformer?

We have described the saint as a scrupulously conscientious man who asks: "Was I, in doing such and such an act, acting as a good man, with a pure heart and having my will set on the object it should be set on—or was I acting with an unworthy motive?" Though we are often rightly impatient of the person who is always talking of his motives, still this reflection on the springs of conduct is the source from which morality is perpetually renewing its life. It keeps the saint from becoming a mere legalist.

But when a man engages on such reflection, is he likely to become more disposed to do his duty, and does it make him any wiser as to what his particular duties are? What we can definitely say is that (while reflection on the ideal of morality will not of itself produce a miraculous revelation of new duties and requirements, and while it may only direct our atten-

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tion to what we have already seen producing good results), the reflection upon the ideal will direct us to *what we have already seen producing good results*. Reflection on our past acts in relation to their results, and the attempt to understand *why* those actions were obligatory, will bring out the high lights in them, disentangling essentials (the 'whys') from non-essentials, giving us these essentials as the *aim* of action in present and future circumstances. It will keep us morally athletic, so that our practice becomes highly sensitive to our knowledge. And this will have its effect on the content of our ideal; for, while still seemingly accepting the standards of those around him, the conscientious man will have transcended the level of routine action and the mere law of opinion. He will do his duties in a different spirit, and do many which the law of opinion would think little less of him for neglecting, but which to him appear to follow inexorably from the logic of the situation and the general moral demands. He will be like the great common lawyer who (from reflection upon a body of decisions, maxims, and principles, keeping the end of the system in view) is able to select the most appropriate principle and give it a freshly significant application; thus creating a new precedent--perpetually making new law while he is ostensibly applying old. Holding to the ideal of perfection, not as a mere verbal formula, but as a genuine practical ideal, the saint will find it developing its own content out of the stuff supplied by circumstance, custom and growing knowledge.

It is clear, then, that the distinction between the saint and the reformer cannot be sharply drawn. Conscientiousness, beginning with loyalty to accepted

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standards, almost inevitably rises above them *through* that loyalty.

How far a man's reforming tendencies will go—how far they will make him a publicly marked man to whom the title 'reformer' is given—will depend on his particular gifts and situation.

But even apart from any reforming effects to which 302 it may lead, saintliness or conscientiousness has its own value. In a perfect state, the moral reformer, as such, and the need for him, would have vanished; not so the self-abasement before an ideal of perfection.

This act of self-abasement (or, equally well, self- 303 exaltation) is, in a sense, the one final and permanent expression of spiritual character; for, though in principle one with other expressions, it remains when the necessity for them has gone. When that which is perfect shall come, reforming shall have vanished. But saintliness will endure forever.

We have just spoken of those characteristics which distinguish the reformer from the saint as symptoms of growth rather than of attainment. Yet they are characteristics which play a great part in the development of humanity towards its ideal; and it is time now to face a question which has probably already presented itself to the reader's mind. If these important characteristics merely arise as incidental to the 'passing phases' of development, how can we, who are in the evolutionary process, say finally which are not merely transient characteristics of humanity? How can we be certain that any specifically human interest or activity will be "conserved in the end?" Are we 188 indeed justified in looking forward to a full and eternal perfection of the human spirit in which it will have



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attained all that it is apparently aiming towards, here and now? If the special characteristics of the reformer are transient, are there any which are not?

189 In the first place, we may repeat some conclusions previously reached.<sup>1</sup> We should recall that a process *ad infinitum* is not a development; for in development, the end must be continuously present through the process from first to last; otherwise it is not a development of anything, but merely a change or series of changes. Further, though all other capacities, such as animal functions, etc., may come to be and pass away, yet a capacity consisting in a self-conscious personality cannot be supposed so to pass. It partakes of the eternal nature; time exists for it; it is not in time. It is more difficult to think of spirits as extinguished than as developing to eternal perfection. So much by way of re-stating previous general conclusions

When we try to develop these conclusions more concretely we are, of course, handicapped by our present lack of knowledge as to what our capacities *are*, for we know them only as realized. But we can distinguish between certain demands which are fundamental, and certain which, properly viewed, are not  
276 so. Among those unessential demands we may place the demand for pleasure. But there is one at least which may be regarded as essential—the realization of man's perfection as a moral being—the develop-  
287 ment of the good will itself. Certainly it is difficult to see what the good will would be like in a context of perfection. Under the hampering conditions of terrestrial life, morality often appears to impose arbitrary limits on our other capacities, such as the aesthetic and scientific. Yet surely these also have their place in the total perfection?

<sup>1</sup> Page 60 ff.

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The only possible answer to these questions is that, 288-90 while we do not know adequately what the end of the developing process is, we do know that it must be the perfection of *man*. Aesthetic and intellectual perfection cannot be excluded; but neither are they sufficient. The perfection is the perfection of a social being; and it must therefore include a perfectly good will. Our difficulty is this: virtue is a good (we say the absolute good); artistic and intellectual activity are also human capacities and 'goods.' We seem, however, to find the first separable from the other two, and yet we also feel that there must be some *ultimate unity* of 'good.' Admittedly, we cannot solve this antinomy at present; but we may at least indicate a helpful line of thought. Why is it assumed there *must* be an ultimate unity of good? Is it not because the self is a unity? And if that is the real ground of the assumption, must we not regard with suspicion the apparent 'fact' that the development of the good will, here and now, is able to take place apart from aesthetic and intellectual development? Indeed, our puzzle may well be due to the fact that we are beginning with two contradictory assumptions: (1) the assumption of the unity of the good (because the self is a unity); and (2) the assumption that moral, aesthetic and intellectual perfection have no necessary relation one to another (because the self has separate 'faculties'). Is it not a self-contradiction to demand a unitary good, and at the same time divide the self into various 'faculties,' each with its independent 'capacity?' At any rate, if it is this latter assumption which is causing the trouble, it is one which is rejected in our chapter on the relation of intellect to will.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MORAL IDEAL IN HISTORY

A fitting conclusion or appendix to our account of the moral ideal and its influence upon the progress of mankind will be to bring our theory to the touchstone of historical fact, and see how far that history and our theory throw each other into clearer light. We shall select two important epochs, that of the Greek city state and that of modern Christendom, comparing them with each other and attempting to trace the process by which the ideals of the one have developed into the ideals of the other. We have said<sup>1</sup> that the development of morality is a development *of* morality, and not from some a-moral attitude to a moral one. We have further suggested that the development of morality can be analysed into two factors: first, the gradual extension in the range of persons recognized as persons, i.e. as sharers in the common good; and secondly, the complementary deepening of the conception as to what this common good really is.

248 However much primitive man may have conceived the good in material terms, it has always been, in some dim way, apprehended as the good for *man*—something in which *his* desires will find satisfaction, his interests and capacities realization. In primitive tribal society, in the desert life of the nomadic Semites, as for the poorest good man today, it is not some abstract  
83-4 'family life' which inspires toil and endeavour, but the conception of sons and daughters as having opportunities for enjoying decent lives in a near or more

<sup>1</sup> Pages 117 and 123 f.

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remote future. True, as the horizon of man's potentialities expands, the conception of what this decent life is becomes more complex. The Athenian, with his interest in art and philosophy, regarded as a virtue the exercise of any noteworthy faculty; so that Aristotle had to draw a distinction between intellectual virtues and those of habit and conduct. But the ruling principle throughout was that the virtue was expressed in man's own doing or becoming, and the virtuous will as the will to further such doing and becoming.

There were, no doubt, ages in which this interest 249 in self-development, while active, took no reflective account of itself. But when the period of reflection is reached, there arises a request for a definite theoretical conception of the ends of human achievement. Is there, it is asked, some one *main* end? And this question is not one of idle speculation. The asking, and the attempt to answer, may show discrepancies amongst the ends actually pursued, and help to concentrate and direct the energies of practical life. Hence in the Greek philosophers we find, on the occasion of new factors (growth of commerce, contact with other national ideas and religions) arising in the social situation, reflection upon those ends and customs of common life; we find the philosophers thinking through to a conception of the unity of the virtues (as in Socrates); and, as a necessary complement, the attempt, in Plato, to reform the current practice and outlook. From the Greeks comes the connected scheme of the practical virtues within which the educated conscience of Christendom still moves when impartially reflecting upon what ought to be done. The growth of scientific knowledge and the work of religious teachers and societies have, no doubt, advanced our understanding

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of the content of the virtuous life, but the articulated framework remains, in its main outline, what the Greek philosophers left it.

1-1; & 4-6 The Greek philosophers did not profess to be the inventors of the notion of the virtuous life. They were simply seeking a clearer view of the end to which citizen life was actually directed, the philosophers being moved by what was simply another expression of the same spiritual activity which had brought these institutions and activities into being. But this reflection brought out a new and influential form of virtue—the demand that man should understand the law he obeys and the good for which he is working. This was not simply the construction of a theory of virtue, but the advance to a higher order of virtue itself. In the Greeks we have, perhaps, the first really clear and systematic expression of the conviction that every form of real goodness must rest on the will to be good, which has no object other than its own fulfilment. When the same conviction came before the world in the language of religious enthusiasm, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” and when a personal life was lived in this conviction, steadfastly as that of Socrates, but with the substitution of ‘faith’ for ‘reason,’ and in world conditions of a different order, its appeal reached more widely and with a new power. But if those affected by the new appeal asked themselves clearly what it meant, the answer came (consciously or not) mainly in the thought of the Greek philosophers.

252 Purity of heart is concerned with *motive*—it is the mark of the ‘saint,’ of the conscientious will directed to a common good as distinct from merely private good; and it marks off the truly good from the seeming

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good will. Its essence is well brought out by Plato and Aristotle. "The desire for what is beautiful and noble—this is the common character of all the virtues," says Aristotle; and though these words may lose something of their original depth by being used to cloak activities which produce what is truly beautiful and noble neither in intent nor in result; still the words mean that direction of effort to the realization of spiritual faculties and potentialities is the ground of every virtue. It is perfectly true that the end, as 253 conceived by the Greek philosophers, was in many ways vague and indefinite; and it is perfectly true that Christianity has immensely advanced their ideal in the sense of giving it richer content, and in the sense of widening the range of persons to whom it is applicable; but the Greeks did give a final expression to the 'formal' character of this ideal of a free and pure morality—emphasising that purity of heart which is a genuine 'disinterested interest' in the contribution towards a common good, the good of a society of persons. This 'formal' characterization has not, of course, supplied a fixed and unalterable rule of life, such as the jaded conscience sometimes sighs for; but that is not a defect in Greek philosophy. It is because of the nature of morality itself, as the progressive construction of habits and attitudes of a self-determined spiritual agent. Anything in the nature of a final rule, anything more final than the 'clues to conduct' supplied by the reflection upon past experience of personal and social history in the light of an ideal of Perfection, is embraced only by those who have a distorted conception of goodness.

The essential identity of the Christian view with that of the Greeks, and, at the same time, the distinctive

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advance made by us, will be most clearly brought out if we take two particular virtues—Fortitude and Temperance, e.g.—and compare Aristotle's view of them with that of modern Christendom.

57-8 The 'Christian worker,' devoting himself to the care of the sick in a dangerous area, has the virtue Aristotle called fortitude, though Aristotle could recognize it only in the citizen soldier; because, while for Aristotle as for us, the virtuous life must be self-determined, yet, for him, rational self-determination can only be for a select few. Large numbers of men were to him "instruments." He may have felt scruples<sup>1</sup> about this Greek attitude, in so far as he felt it incumbent on him to justify the institution of slavery by the somewhat paradoxical doctrine that the Barbarian finds his true development in subserving the purposes of the superior Greek citizen. The doctrine is paradoxical in the sense that it admits the question of the Barbarian's true development to be a relevant one. It admits the "right" to some kind of self-determination, and at the same time asserts the Barbarian to find this in being used as an "instrument." But for all these hints at future humanitarianism, it remains true that Plato and Aristotle were too much children of their fathers to reach any conception of humanity as a kingdom of ends; and, for that reason, Aristotle's conception of the content of the virtue "Fortitude" is greatly limited.

208 With the recognition of rights in human beings as such, new capacities have been realized as well in the old privileged classes as in the newly emancipated. We often suppose that gain for the many has meant loss for the older privileged few, but this is a super-

<sup>1</sup> Scruples were certainly felt by others, even before his time. See Bury's *History of Greece*, p. 582.

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ficial view. If there is any analogy between spiritual and material progress, we may find food for thought in the pronouncement of historians that the ordinary middle-class citizen to-day lives in an environment of comforts and really secure power which noblemen of five centuries ago would have envied. Similarly, we may say that, with the development of humanitarianism and the paring down of privileges of birth, the opportunities for greatness have not been diminished. After all, is not the scope for greatness much wider and higher for a man called upon to deal with persons, than for one who has to deal with goods and chattels? Only when we leave out the greater demands made upon the elected leader of a free people, and all the virtues successful leadership will call into play, can we compare his opportunities and greatness with those of the ancient despot to the entire disadvantage of the former. Brought to the test of modern requirements, how would Alexander the Great compare with Cromwell or Washington? Or with Schweitzer who, possessing the ability which makes a great soldier, uses it for construction rather than destruction? The Quaker 259 philanthropist has the same virtue of Fortitude as the citizen soldier; but the new conditions of life have given rise to qualities such as genuine sympathy with inferiors, tolerance for the weak and dull, very different from the pride which, for Aristotle, was inseparable from heroic endurance.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that, if Aristotle's view was more confined, and if it associates 252, & 260 heroic endurance with something not easily distinguishable from arrogance and conceit, it is altogether free from association with the low motives so often coupled with heroism in the exhortations of some Christian



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divines—the endurance of pain and poverty in this life for the sake of a greater reward of pleasure and riches in a future. Of course the rhetoric of the preacher is often a caricature of the genuinely Christian attitude; and the ‘ethos’ of a society (created by successive generations of men and women who have done justly and loved mercy) exercises its wholesome effect on the moral consciousness, when, as occasionally happens, darkened counsel issues from those channels which one expects to provide light. We are not suggesting that the Aristotelian ideal of fortitude is more pure than the genuinely Christian; the latter, indeed, has become much more deep and comprehensive. We are only maintaining that the two are the same in *principle*. Those who do not see this, and who speak as if Christianity gives light to every age, but borrows none, might well derive some understanding of the ideal they profess by making a spiritual pilgrimage to ancient Athens.

261; Alongside of *Fortitude* the Greeks placed the virtue  
& 264 *Temperance*, Temperance standing to allurements of pleasure and inclination, as Fortitude to pain and fear. Here again we shall find that, while the same in principle, the Christian conception of Temperance is more deep and comprehensive than the Greek. For Aristotle, temperance seems to refer merely to the  
262 control over animal appetites; but, upon looking more closely, we see the identity of principle between his “temperance” and every wise form of self-sacrifice or renunciation. The principle is that the mere renunciation is not good in itself, but takes its value from the ends it subserves. Perhaps the earliest clear statement of this same principle is to be found, so far as Christianity is concerned, in the sound practical advice of

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St. Paul to Timothy and to those troubled about "meats." It was certainly *lived* earlier by his master; but in Jesus' explicit teaching there is often the suggestion that renunciation is meritorious in and for itself. It is to the teaching of St. Paul, then, that we go for the clearest early Christian assertion of the principle. To eat or not to eat—their moral significance depends on the situation and context. To renounce or deny one's self acquires its value from its purpose.

For the Greek, the end subserved was the well-being 263;  
of the state. Temperance was "in order to keep fit & 265  
for worthy citizenship." There was, indeed, a false philosophical gloss upon the meaning of this virtue, interpreting disapproval of lust or indiscriminate indulgence of sexual desire as being due to the fact that there we are satisfying an appetite common to us and the lower animals. But if that interpretation were sound, the appetite would have to be suppressed altogether; for one satisfaction of it would be 'brutish' quite as much as many. To carry out this view logically, the good man ought to pluck out his eyes because animals share our faculty of vision. The true interpretation of disapproval of lust is that indiscriminate or lawless satisfaction of desire would cause confusion and disrupt the state. Certainly the line drawn by the 266  
Greeks between lawful and lawless love would not do for modern times, because of the status of women and slaves in Greece. The wife and property (including human property) of another citizen were not to be interfered with, but to use one's own wife or slaves as "instruments to pleasure" transgressed no rights, was a mere legitimate use of personal property, and not against the interests of the common good—i.e. the good of any of those who were really persons or citizens.

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The Greeks were perfectly familiar and in agreement with the spirit of Jesus' comment on the seventh commandment. The virtue of chastity they were well aware of and practised. What they did not realize was its full extent. They did not realize here, any more than elsewhere in their conception of society, that every human being is a 'subject,' the natural bearer of rights, and not a mere instrument. And it is this principle alone which forms the moral ground for chastity as we understand it. The mere restraint of appetite is not in itself a virtue. Virtues imply a society of persons—beings who are capable of aiming at a good, and therefore capable of possessing rights; and it is because, for us (as not for the Greeks), human beings as such are persons and bearers of rights and entitled to claim duties from us, that our notion of chastity has grown and deepened so as to have reference to the rights of all present and possible future individuals.

- 67-8
- 269 Besides this limitation in his conception of Temperance, Aristotle also expressly excludes from the sphere of this virtue "pleasures of the soul," such as gratified ambition and love of learning, and such "pleasures of the body" as hearing, sight and smell. This would hardly be called a defect if he placed possible renunciation of those "pleasures" under some other virtue; but he does not at all appear to have believed that any high type of virtue could be shown in the renouncing of those goods. Yet such renunciation we regard as often expressive of the greatest kind of self-sacrifice.
- 270-1 E.g., a person of means may give up prospects of a scholarly career in answer to a call of distress. It is just the "moral enfranchisement" of all men which has made such sacrifices part of our moral field of vision, as 'they were not part of the Greeks.'

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It is surely not an idle and profitless speculation which tries to trace some "increasing purpose through the ages." Such an increasing purpose we believe to be towards a state in which Kant's 'Kingdom of ends' will be fully recognized. At the high-water mark of Greek city life we get a highly-developed type of 'republic' where each is his own master, and yet his brother's keeper—but this republic was founded on the institution of slavery. The "increasing purpose" is expressed in the gradually successful attempt to preserve, and at the same time enlarge, this republic, until it becomes co-extensive with humanity.

It may be objected that it is surely not a defect but 272-3 a merit of Greek thought that it refused to regard as a virtue the renunciation of the pure and higher pleasures. Our answer is that the virtue lies not in the giving up, but in the giving up *because* it makes for a larger realization of human capacities. When we compare the life of humble service, involving the sacrifice of those higher pleasures, with the Greek's 274 life of free activity and enjoyment of beautiful sights and sounds, we might say that, in a sense, the latter is higher and nobler. And this is true if by higher and nobler we mean intrinsically more desirable, the whole human context being left out of account. That it is intrinsically more desirable is shown by the fact that we renounce these pleasures in order that, by our renouncing, many more will ultimately be able to share in them. But if asked whether the man who tried to return simply to the Greek moral outlook would, in the present-day social context, be a better and nobler man than the one who renounces, we should unhesitatingly say "No; he is an inhuman egotist, a moral imbecile." The superiority of the

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275; virtue of self-denial in its full Christian, as distinct from  
& 277 its Greek, expression, does not lie in the *burden* of renunciation, but in the recognition that (the burden being there to be borne by *some one*) it ought to be *shared* so long as it is there. For the *curtailment* of our pleasures we are neither morally better nor worse, but in *accepting* the curtailment because to do so will give a fairer chance to others—in that we have made a moral advance upon the Greeks.

78-80 We give the 'honours', then, to the Christian type of virtue over the Greek type, because the former makes for greater realization of human capacities. For us, as for Aristotle, the good for man is to *be* good, and to be good is to contribute in some way disinterestedly, or for the sake of doing it, to the perfection of man. But when we ask *how* this is to be done, his answer differs from ours because we are conscious of claims he did not dream of.

281-3 Yet the modern view of the good would have been impossible without the operation of those ideas which found expression in the Greek philosophers. Of course they were not the only contributors to moral development. Trade has played its part, and so has conquest, and conquest generally arises from selfishness. But neither trade nor conquest would have been adequate to bring about this 'higher' notion of duties; there was required the moral interest itself which used the conditions, brought about by these agencies, for an end not necessarily envisaged by trader and victorious general. This end is the common good, a good in which there can be no competition as between man and man<sup>1</sup>

284 There had, of course, been pursuit of this good long before the age of the Greek philosophers, but they

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note F.

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made the pursuit of it more self-conscious. And their teaching has, in its turn, initiated developments, leading to results—such as the disappearance of the distinction between Greek and Barbarian, Bond and Free, Jew and Gentile—which they themselves could not foresee.

It is not part of our purpose to try and estimate 285 the precise share of the various agencies which have brought about the conception of universal human brotherhood. But we may say that two things were vitally necessary for the development of that conception: (1) the interest in promoting the common good, and (2) reflection upon the nature of this good; and if we can say that the great Jewish prophets, and especially the prophet of Galilee and his successors, have been the chief inspiration to the former in modern Christendom, the Greek philosophers, and especially Socrates and his successors, have as surely been the chief inspiration to the latter.

To conclude, we may sum up thus: Morality is 286 founded on an actuating idea of an absolute good consisting in the realization of capacities of human souls; but it acts at first unconscious of its full implications. Its further development is traceable to two main factors: the natural development of those institutions and customs to which this idea has already given rise, in the hands of men conscientiously doing the duty lying to hand; and the reflection upon those institutions and customs. Under these influences there has arisen an ever-widening range of persons recognized as capable of, and entitled to, a share in the common good; and, at the same time, a deepening of the conception of the good itself as non-competitive, non-material, the perfection of personal life—goodness itself.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF MORAL THEORY

In comparing the Greek and Christian conceptions of virtue, we have referred to the contribution made by the Greek philosophers to moral progress, and it is fitting that we should raise in a more general way this question of the relation of moral theory to moral practice.

What is really wanted, it may be said, and what we 290;  
are entitled to expect from moral philosophy is some & 310  
definite criterion of right and wrong which can be  
construed into particular duties; while the theory  
advanced above only counsels some problematically  
realizable 'perfection' which does not seem to have  
any very definite relation to the concrete problems  
of life.

In attempting to assess the significance and validity 311  
of this criticism, we may say at once that the practical  
value of any *theory* of morals presupposes a practical  
interest in the moral ideal; and the practical value,  
in any case, must be negative rather than positive—  
saving the mind from the sophistry of selfishness, or  
from perplexity brought about by apparent conflict  
of duties, and giving the moral reason a chance of  
looking squarely at situations. One is sometimes  
tempted, indeed, to say that moral philosophy is  
necessary chiefly to remedy the evils it has itself  
brought into being. Under the influence of an opera-  
tive ideal, institutions and practices grow up, reflection  
upon them commences, and with our real need for,

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and sometimes rash construction of generalizations, we try to construct "universal rules" of behaviour—these universal rules often conflicting with each other, or failing to cover all phases of the life of a self-realizing spirit. These rules then attract eager champions who, in the heat of controversy, become enslaved to them. But while theorizing may originate these evils, it alone is competent to cure them. In any case, it is not in our  
312 power to stop thinking; and, if think and form opinions we must, it is better we should try to do it systematically and well, rather than badly and at haphazard. So that, even if moral philosophy has a negative rather than a positive value, the function of resolving antinomies rather than discovering ideals and deducing a universe of positive duties from them, its value is not wholly negligible.

313 To bring out its value it will be best to take some examples which show the service rendered by moral philosophy in cases of perplexity as to the right line of conduct; but we recognize that these cases will be  
314 exceptions to the general trend of ordinary life. Practical perplexities for the moral consciousness seem always to arise through one or other of the following causes. (a) through the conflict of abstract formulae of different aspects of the ideal (as "Thou shalt not be an accessory to murder" and "Thou shalt not be a party to deceit"); (b) through conflicting commands delivered by two different institutions which claim, or are acknowledged to possess, a 'divine' sanction for the authority they exercise (commands of State and Church); (c) from conflict between a formula and a command of such an institution ("Thou shalt not kill," and the demands on a soldier on active service); or (d) from conflict of formula or institution with some particular



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impulse or individual conception of human good. From these cases of perplexity we have to distinguish questions as to matters of *fact* (whether, e.g., such and such a course of conduct is at all *likely* to cause death or injury to anyone), and questions of the sophistical kind which aim at finding 'justification' for conduct our conscience cannot really sanction.

To consider, e.g., a case of (d).<sup>1</sup> What counsel would 315  
the philosopher be able to offer to Jeanie Deans in the matter of holding to the rule of veracity or speaking a single untruth to save her sister from condemnation for a crime of which she really believed her innocent? If this question is put in a general way, if it be asked 316  
whether one is *never* entitled to lie in order to save an innocent person from death, then no simple 'yes' or 'no' is possible. We have to take it down to the particular case, setting out the whole context of circumstances, in order to see whether the departure from the principle of veracity is inspired by the highest motive.

That a person would begin to analyse the situation 317  
in an unbiassed way under the actual necessity of acting is very unlikely. In the hour of action it is the ideal into which one has lived and thought oneself that takes command. But in preparing the soul for such tests, sheer dispassionate theorizing about morality—the analysis of the meaning of right and duty—can do a great deal, by making one sensitive to the leading issues involved, and enabling one to see them despite

<sup>1</sup> Green in paragraph 314 includes all (a), (b), (c) and (d) under "perplexity of conscience," but in paragraph 321 he apparently wants to confine "perplexity of conscience" to cases of (b) where two *authorities* are opposed. The distinction is not really of importance. All four are the same in principle in the sense that they are all conflicts of two apparently definite 'leadings' of the Ideal.

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personal considerations; and also by counteracting the bad effects of sceptical or wrongly inspired theories about the basis of moral ideas.

This last point—the value of theorizing to counteract erroneous beliefs about the significance and basis of moral obligation—will repay further consideration. Before systematic reflection upon moral ideals has begun, and just because man is always to some extent a thinking being, *unsystematic* reflection has been operative, resulting in the construction of explanatory ‘myths’ and luxuriantly imaginative divinities with whose ‘commands’ these ideals are identified. As richer and wider experience gives the inherent logic of the human mind more material upon which to work, the cruder elements in myth disappear, and ‘moral theology’ becomes more and more refined, generally resting in the imaginative conception of a supreme and all-seeing but invisible ruler to whom service is due, from whom commands proceed, and who punishes their violation.

318 But, it being a necessity of our rational nature that anything remotely suggestive of merely “imaginative explanation” should be subject to examination and criticism, a stage is reached when we are forced to enquire whether there really is such an ‘imponent’ of duty—whether, e.g., the “Law of Moses” is binding on us *because* it has been commanded and sanctioned by penalties, or whether it originated in any source other than the moral consciousness. And the more we reflect on the nature of morality, the more do we conclude that the conception of an external divine legislator is an imaginative explanation. If, for purposes of spiritual instruction, we continue to employ the imaginative range of ideas—as Plato would teach

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'morals' to children through the medium of fable—it is well to remember that "imaginations" must necessarily be in finite terms, and cannot be reasoned from in order to yield metaphysically true conclusions, as we can reason logically from statements of fact. As we are now, the reality of the divine nature is not comprehensible by us, though that nature is reproduced and operative *in* us, through our ideas of perfection, and in the idea of a being in whom this perfection is eternally real. This operation of the divine nature in us, and the negative idea we have of it as the Best, acting upon imagination, yields the language of ordinary religion.

But just because imaginative language tends to be 319-  
taken as statement about matter of fact, and because 320  
we do attempt to draw metaphysically significant conclusions from it (as, e.g., in the familiar systems of Christian theology), philosophical criticism of its concepts must inevitably follow; and the main business of philosophy is not primarily to show its lack of rational coherence, but to disentangle the real, operative ideals from their imaginative expression. Moral ideals are commands only in the metaphorical sense that our possession of those ideals implies in us the expression or reproduction of an infinite spirit, and a sense of personal responsibility for realizing them.

This conception of philosophy's attitude to the language of religion and theology refers us back to what we said was the chief practical value of moral philosophy. In a sceptical or critical age, philosophy has to explain the real nature of the moral consciousness and the source of its power, showing that moral ideals are not without rational justification; and it does this by investigating the language in which

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those ideals are clothed and presented, making a distinction between the ideals themselves and their picturesque dress, so as to meet the contention that those ideals have no more truth than their imaginative expressions.

Along with this investigation of the language in which moral ideals are clothed, there will also go a review of the claims, made by or on behalf of institutions and individuals, to be the channels through which alone they are communicated to men. Apprehension of the truth that morality is not fundamentally obedience to 'divine commands,' much less to commands issued 'under Divine commission' by men who, "being human, may err, and, what is more, may lie"; the apprehension of the truth that 'divine commands' is an imaginative way of describing those promptings of the divine spirit as reproduced in each individual; and apprehension of the further truth that no generalization as to particular duties, based upon past obedience to those promptings, can be *absolute* in the sense in which the ideal itself is absolute—apprehension of those things should help to show the method of dealing with perplexities of conscience when, e.g., two institutions claiming divine sanction for their assumption of authority, or two formulae claiming divine revelation as their source, make conflicting demands on the conscientious individual.

21-4 In preparation for such conflicts of 'authorities' and divisions of conscience against itself, philosophy can be of use by explaining the origin of the conflict, and, without presuming to decide for either side, directing the mind to the true end to which each deliverance is somehow relative.

The counsel offered by philosophy, while of little

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use to an individual in the stress of a practical situation, or to an excited populace, can affect individuals themselves and the few who lead the many, by preparation in meditation beforehand—a meditation the effects of which issue spontaneously in times of practical trial. The philosopher would point out that no merely external authority is final, that no precedent (no matter by whom created) is an absolute rule. But he will also point out that, whilst none of these is final, all take their significance and claim to authority from their subserving a true, and at the same time common good; and that it must be the idea of this good, with the knowledge, gained from past experience of the race and of the individual himself, as to how it will, here and now, be best advanced, which must decide what one's actual duty is. This decision is what a man calls the final dictate of his conscience, and it may, in extreme cases, conflict with all formulae or authorities which he knows.

The imaginative idea of an external imponent is not intrinsically necessary to consciousness of what we call (metaphorically) the moral law, whereas it is the source of apparent conflicts of duties.

But while moral duty has a significance apart from 325 any external authority, it is important that philosophy, in showing the 'derived power' of external authorities, should emphasize the fact that moral duty does have a significance. If the philosopher leaves the impression that the authorities, to which men have looked, and still do look, for practical guidance, simply issue orders which we obey through fear of disobedience—and nothing more—we have little to thank him for. In point of fact, such external authorities, while they cannot be ultimate for the individual, are a necessary

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factor in social life; and the man who realizes all the confusion which exercise of private judgment can bring about sees this necessity, and gives willing assent to the constitution of such authorities, with full consciousness of the fact that perhaps it is his judgment and conviction which will receive their attention and condemnation. As has been well said, the state has a moral right to make martyrs, and individuals have a moral right to be martyrs. That submission to the rule of public authorities works moderately well in general, is proved by the pragmatic test. In being constituted and recognized as public authorities, they commend themselves to the individual, not exactly as his own complete and highest will (as some affirm), but at least as furthering objects in which he is interested. Often he may express dissatisfaction with their particular methods in points of detail, and occasionally he may offer stubborn resistance; again he may not see clearly how their commands contribute to the end; but, as a general rule, he trusts the authority as having better judgment and a more complete view of circumstances and means than he has himself.

253;  
& 326 Certainly, those public authorities often make claims which deny to the individual any moral right to oppose them; and individuals who feel they require "infallible guides," either to show them what is true and good, or to take the responsibility of decisions off their shoulders, are willing to grant these claims. But the whole round of argument and appeal to confirmatory sign goes upon the tacit assumption that the individual can really procure an infallible guide "through the maze of this life to the portals of heaven." Such he cannot have, other than whatever infallibility belongs to the principle "let right prevail though the

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heavens fall." To want more is to want a proper appreciation of what morality really means.

The philosopher will point this out, and he will insist that, however those authorities describe themselves, words do not alter facts. Apart from insisting on this principle, however, it would be a blunder for the philosopher to take literally the language in which those authorities describe themselves or are described by their subjects; and then, on the ground that moral obligation cannot be imposed from without, try to dethrone them from their legitimate field of work as conservers and distributors of a great fund of inherited moral wisdom; setting up in their place a confused babel of individual wills, encouraged to act on spontaneous convictions, with no obligation to attend the school of historical experience, or to entertain the notion that, amongst the infinite possibilities, one is that their judgment of fact may be wrong and their conception of right narrow. Rather, without detracting from the genuine though limited authority those institutions do exercise, or from the loyalty which all good men feel towards them, the philosopher should try to help men understand them, gradually emancipating this loyalty to institutions from mere fear of their coercive power. When a man thus sees their limited and derived title to exact obedience, he can give whole-hearted support to them and their purpose, without losing moral perspective when, through conflicting commands, their guidance for a time fails him.

Under certain social conditions, then, and in face 327 of certain intellectual movements, philosophy can render practical service. To pretend to supply a moral dynamic would be impertinent. The moral dynamic

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is in the spiritual nature of man. As a man and a citizen the philosopher may help, with his fellow-citizens, to supply this, and he can and ought to act as its organ. But *qua* philosopher, his business is not to bring it into existence, or even to strengthen it, but to understand it. And he will render his best practical service to the community, *qua* philosopher, by attending to his proper work of analysis, removing misapprehensions as to what is true and what is not, and thus removing obstacles to the effort after true well-being. He is, if one cares to put it so, an intellectual scavenger, commissioned to clear away those speculative rubbish-heaps which are the by-products of our search for the true and the good; and though he may not thus rank with the skilled architect, mason and carpenter of the spiritual city, the scavenger is a useful citizen; and that is more than many, who yet unthinkingly take for granted the results of his labours, are willing to concede to the philosopher.

328 In concluding this chapter we ought, however, to repeat what we said near the beginning—that, to derive any help from moral philosophy in this way, one must already be actuated by the moral ideal. It implies a previous discipline of character which comes only from conducting oneself under the guidance of those institutions which philosophy teaches us to understand and value on their real merits. It is a common complaint that, in learning to seek the ‘rationale’ of the rules they are trained to obey, men become ‘spoiled,’ or ‘have their convictions undermined’ by philosophy. These charges are, as a rule, made by men who are thinking of particular convictions; and it is arguable that humanity is greatly the gainer the more certain convictions are undermined.



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But sometimes philosophy seems to make cynics and moral sceptics of its children. It may be so; it may very well be that, when once imagined sanctions behind moral obligations are seen to be merely imaginary, some men are glad to repudiate the obligations. But it is doubtful whether philosophy in these cases does more than affect the *kind* of excuse men make for neglecting their obligations. It is their real attitude to morality coming out, once ghostly fears have been removed, as the cur's nature comes out when the stick is hidden from view. This only supports our contention that philosophy is of practical moral value only to those having the disposition to morality. Philosophy doesn't make good men bad; perhaps it does not make bad men good; but it helps all men to see more clearly the implications of the practical ideals actuating them, and therefore helps to make good men better.

## CHAPTER X

### CRITICISM OF UTILITARIANISM

One of the functions of moral philosophy, we said, is to cure the evils of which it is itself the cause; and, by this, as explained, we meant the criticism of previous conceptions of the nature and foundation of morals. In earlier chapters we have referred occasionally to Hedonism, taking for granted that its principal assumptions are false, with the promise to justify our attitude later on. This chapter will offer a criticism of Utilitarianism, including its Hedonistic presuppositions.

329- Utilitarianism is entitled to serious attention, for it  
330 is the theory held by great liberal lawyers and reformers like Bentham and Mill. Some of its critics have preferred to make a stand for 'principle' as against the mere 'expediency' of Utilitarianism; but very often this 'principle' was only based on a narrower  
331-2 expediency than Utilitarianism championed. On the whole, the practical adoption of the moral end as "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" has helped men, acting under the influence of ideals and rules of virtue, to apply these rules and ideals for the benefit of a wider range of persons; and whatever we may think of the implications of the doctrine that "push-pin is as good as poetry if it gives equal pleasure," it is undeniable that the doctrine acts as a check upon those forms of injustice which cultural and social snobbishness are apt to breed.

333 At the same time we are forced to the conviction that, once these questions of privilege are solved—once we have gained admission for "the greatest good

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of the greatest number" as a rule for social life and institutions—and reflection has begun to concentrate on what this good is, the Utilitarian assumption that the good is pleasure would almost inevitably lead to certain evils, perhaps as great as those it successfully exposed. In fact, the practical value of Utilitarianism 334 has been seen chiefly in its application to questions of public policy; but, when we adopt it as a guide to private conduct, the aspect of Utilitarianism which gives a theory of the good itself would be the most prominent and relevant consideration. And the more 335 Utilitarianism does its public work well, the more is it inevitable that its proposed "scientific test" of individual conduct will attract attention; and a wrong 336 theory of morals can be harmful to the extent of clouding the vision of those who are attempting intelligently to live the good life.

The criticism of Utilitarianism, then, should be directed not upon its conception of the moral end as the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but upon its theory that the object, attainment of which gives happiness, is always "pleasure."

In earlier chapters the view has been expressed that, since the psychical factors in all acts of will are the same, the good will is to be distinguished from the bad according to its motive or object. The good will pursues one kind of object, and the bad will another. For Hedonism, on the other hand, this distinction of objects is mere illusion. The motive or object is *always* 156-7 the same, namely, to get pleasure. Conditions of attaining pleasure vary, the means to the end may differ, but the end itself is always the same.

This doctrine, known as Psychological Hedonism, 158- is plausible but untrue, for it is only a confusion which 162

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makes pleasure seem to be the object of all desire. In desire, the individual directs himself to the realization of some idea, as to an object which he conceives as satisfying an interest. In all attainment of objects (i.e. in all satisfying of a self's interests) there is pleasure. Therefore, it is said, pleasure is the object of desire. But supposing pleasure *were* the object aimed at, it could not be the pleasure which results from attainment of desire. The position may be expressed thus: Desire is for an object. Now this object may or may not be attained. If it is attained, the attainment gives rise to a feeling of pleasure. But the pleasure which accompanies attainment of an end is not the end attained. The fact that we "feel pleased" at having got what we aimed at does not mean that this "feeling pleased" was *what* we aimed at.

Thus, even granting that the object aimed at may have been a Pleasure, it is *not* the pleasure which results from attainment of that object. And yet the doctrine that we *always* aim at pleasure is due to our failure to distinguish between these two things: (a) the end aimed at, and (b) the pleasure which results from attaining that end. If this confusion were not made, if the two things were kept clearly distinguished, there would be no plausibility in the doctrine that pleasure is *always* the end.

163- Now this fallacy is at the root of the adoption of  
170 Hedonism by a thinker like J. S. Mill; and his distinction between higher and lower pleasures only obscures, and does not really correct, the errors in his doctrine. It is quite true that pleasures *can* be distinguished qualitatively according to the conditions under which they arise. Plato saw this. The pleasures of a sot are really different from those of a cultured man. But,

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taking account merely of the qualitative differences in pleasures as such, we cannot range them in any order of goodness or desirability, such as is required for giving our arrangement a moral significance. The distinction of 'higher' and 'lower' merely begs the question. Qualitative differences in pleasure only indicate differences of quality, and not necessarily an order of worth or desirability. They entitle us to say only that, to A, such and such a kind of thing gives pleasure; to B, such and such another kind. Comparison of worth, such as allows us to speak of 'more' and 'less,' necessarily involves the possibility of getting a quantitative expression of the qualitative differences; and to get some "common measure," some translation of qualitative into quantitative difference, is necessary, if we profess to appeal to enlightened self-interest when recommending, for social acceptance, one type of pleasure as more desirable than another. We may try to get this quantitative equivalent in 'amount of pleasure.' But Mill expressly departs from the "quantity of pleasure" criterion; and even if he held to it, how could one judge how much the 'higher' pleasures exceed the 'lower' except by seeing which men actually prefer (and, even then, only on the assumption that men always do act for the greatest pleasure)? We are thus back at the point from which we started--the individual preference--and out of that we cannot get, so long as we take pleasure as the aim, and amount or quality of pleasure as the criterion. We may, of course, judge the value of the pleasure by its effects--conduciveness to health, peace, progress, etc.--but then our criterion is no longer pleasure. We are measuring it by a standard which is not pleasure at all.

Most of Mill's inconsistencies in *Utilitarianism* are

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due to his explicit assertion, and implicit surrender, of the doctrine that all men act always for pleasure.

The charge against Hedonism is not, of course, that it wilfully misrepresents the moral consciousness, but that it misinterprets the facts of morality by founding upon a doctrine of volition which is the result of superficial analysis. This same lack of thoroughness comes out again in its attempt to combine the two inconsistent doctrines, (*a*) that in all desire the object is pleasure, and (*b*) that the supreme good is the greatest possible sum of pleasures. At first sight these two doctrines may seem so consistent as to be inseparable; but, when we try to understand what is involved in desiring pleasure, and what in desiring a sum of pleasures, we shall see that the one conception excludes the other.

21-3;     Apart from the fact that the supreme good is a  
&     unity and cannot be understood as a mere series or  
227-8     sum of particulars, the theory of Psychological Hedonism, if correct, would rule out the notion of a sum of pleasures as the supreme good; for since (*ex hypothesi*) *pleasure* alone is desired, and since a *sum* of pleasures is not a pleasure, a sum of pleasures cannot be desired. We are not, it must be pointed out, denying that a sum of pleasures could be desired. We are only saying that it could not, if Psychological Hedonism is true. Just because there cannot be a *feeling* of a sum of pleasures, but only a conception of such a sum, so there cannot be an imagination or anticipation of a feeling of a sum of pleasures. And if this conception of a sum of pleasures were ever to become an object or end of desire, it would imply that Psychological Hedonism is false, for it would argue that the end is not *pleasure*, but the satisfaction of a whole or serial *self*, a self which remains while particular pleasures

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come and pass away, and is not satisfied with any particular pleasure, but only with the greatest *sum*. And, apart altogether from the difficulties raised by the conception of the end as a sum of pleasures, the notion of a 'greatest possible sum' of pleasures is as unmeaning as the notion of greatest possible space or time. 358-9

Some, no doubt, say that it is a sum of pleasures they aim at, because they have been persuaded into the doctrine of Psychological Hedonism. But there are also those who, fully recognizing that "desires terminate upon their objects," and that those objects are in many cases not pleasure, still hold that, ultimately, the good aimed at, for self and for others, is happiness or the greatest possible quantity of pleasures. Benevolence, they say, is not desire for the pleasure of doing good to others. It is really a desire for doing good to them; but their good is to be measured in terms of their pleasure or happiness; and we would not so measure it for them, did we not recognize it as the object of desire to ourselves. Hence the greatest pleasure of all human or sentient beings is the moral end. 224; & 237-9 225

Now there is a serious ambiguity in the doctrine that the end is happiness. If we say we desire the good of others, but that their good and ours consists in a quantity of pleasures, then it is easy to draw the inference that, whether acting for the good of self or for the good of others, we are *always* acting for happiness, and therefore always acting for pleasure. But this 'acting for pleasure or happiness' is a phrase with a double meaning, covering the pursuit of two quite different objects. On the one hand, there is pursuit of personal pleasure; and, on the other, pursuit of the pleasure of others. In the first case, we are acting for 226

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the experience of a personal feeling; in the other, we are acting for an end which is not a personal feeling of ours at all, but the production of that feeling in someone else. Whether it gives me pleasure to produce that feeling in someone else is irrelevant, for the doctrine is that it is not my personal feeling which is the end, but the production of that feeling in someone else.

Now since (according to the theory) we thus act sometimes for our own and sometimes for others' pleasure, there are two different principles upon which we fashion our conduct—the principle of Benevolence (good of others) and the principle of Self Love (good of self). These principles are not reducible to any higher or including unity. They are just different—a conception which is repugnant to our inherent conviction of a unity of direction in all voluntary life. We cannot rest in such dualism, and, to get over it, fall back on the old fallacy of Psychological Hedonism—that the end is one's own personal pleasure.

37-8; Our criticism of Hedonism, up to now, has concentrated on its faulty psychological analysis. But, the  
& 371-3 psychological question being waived, does Hedonism, as its advocates claim, supply a practically useful criterion for conduct? Let us suppose, for the moment, that the Hedonistic criterion is perfectly clear and definite, and ours (perfection) vague and ill-defined;  
339 can we say that Hedonism supplies a genuine test for conduct in those cases where there is no recognizable rule or custom to guide? Suppose, for instance, the question before the individual is whether he will go against a present inclination or social rule (not customarily regarded with disapproval), for the sake of a greater good; then, pleasure being his criterion, he



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has to calculate the amount of pleasure which will follow from any given line of action. How is he to calculate the pleasurable results for self or for the human race as a whole? He cannot. Even if he could, by elaborate calculation, work out a plan of action for himself, his interests and situation being as they are; still, individuals so differ in constitution, circumstance and temperament, that his scheme would be thrown hopelessly out of gear if he attempted to apply it socially. Will he not be forced to recommend barren conformity to established custom, or else throw open the door to unlimited licence?

This criticism is not applicable to our own view. It is true that we only know *that* there must be a Best, without knowing fully *what* it is; but our working conception of the end as 'perfection of humanity' enables us to ask intelligently: "Does this or that usage or action or condition of life favour the more general attainment of the *recognized* excellences of character?" This is a question with a definite, practical import; and surely it is an answerable one. The *acting* upon our practical conclusions will create new situations, and clarify and advance our conception of the end, so that we can put new practical questions to ourselves. It enables us to ask intelligently, even when there is no recognized rule (but only recognized excellence of character), not only "What should I *be* (namely perfect)?" but also "What ought I, here and now, in these circumstances, and with perfection as my end, to *do*?"

The Utilitarian may say that for ordinary practical purposes he can perfectly well accept our criterion—"the greatest perfection of the greatest number"—because those 'virtues' of which we speak represent

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the necessary *means* to pleasure. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Utilitarian apply his criterion of pleasure *directly*.

356 It is very satisfactory to be able to agree that for almost all practical purposes the Utilitarian criterion is in accordance with the "Perfectionist," so far as it does not press the conception of pleasure as the only motive to action. But what we were considering is the contention that the Utilitarian criterion gives better practical guidance than ours; and there is no indication that such a contention is well-founded.

357 Indeed, in the nature of the case, Hedonism must be, in the end, a worse practical guide than Perfectionism, if our conception of the end is true, and Hedonism's false; and were we to enquire as to the real reason why, for the most part, Utilitarianism and Perfectionism are in agreement as to what in general ought to  
50-3; be done, we should find that for Utilitarianism the  
376 ultimate end is not really conceived as pleasure, but as persons enjoying pleasure. The Utilitarian does not think one thousand pleasures better than nine hundred, but that the *Summum Bonum* is that all human or conscious beings should live as pleasantly as possible, without one's pleasure implying pain for another; and the objection to this conception is not that, so far as it goes, it is untrue. The real objection is that, whereas it promised a more definite criterion, it supplies one less definite than our own. It merely says the good life must carry pleasure, whereas we say that the good life moves in a certain direction, or involves a certain kind of activity. The reflection (*a*) on the recognized virtues and the development of life as so far realized, and (*b*) on the *idea* of Perfection, supplies a practical guide to conduct; while the injunction to

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make life as pleasant as possible does not supply this direction, just because pleasure is incidental to any unimpeded activity—even animal function.

A further defect in the theory of Hedonism<sup>1</sup> is that it implies the theory of Determinism. If everyone acts from what is, at the time, his strongest desire, and if the object of desire is always what he conceives as the greatest pleasure, then we have no right to say of anyone that *to him, at the time*, anything would have brought greater pleasure than what he aimed at. His capacity for pleasure is measured by his desires, and the relative strength of his desires by the one (necessarily on Hedonistic assumptions the strongest) which issues in action. Hence, since saying a man *ought*, or *ought not*, to have done what he did implies that he *could* have done differently from what he did, or *could* have got more pleasure than he actually got, then 'ought' and 'ought not,' if used at all by the Hedonist, must bear a totally different meaning from what they do in ordinary language. 340-1;  
&  
345-9

There can be little doubt that holding consistently to the doctrine of Hedonism would tend to the paralysis of moral initiative as we know it; and it was because he would not accept the implications of a consistent Hedonism that J. S. Mill presented so many contradictory lines of thought in his exposition of the Utilitarian philosophy. The great Utilitarians were so intent on practical reforms that the Hedonistic part 350-1;  
& 375

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Psychological Hedonism in particular. But it is doubtful if even Psychological Hedonism is necessarily Deterministic. The Psychological Hedonist might defend freedom on the same ground as Green does; on the ground, namely, that it is our inner character, not an external necessity, which determines us to the pursuit of pleasure. Green himself says we always do and must pursue "self-realization."

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of their ethics was really of secondary importance. Had they been less immersed in these practical affairs (and they would have been less great men had they not responded to the practical needs of their time), had they concentrated more on the theoretical problems of morals and asked themselves why they troubled about social reform at all, why they could not simply adopt, as a practical policy, the principle that the "greatest number" whose happiness they should seek is "Number One"—questions bound to be asked by others who followed them in the realm of philosophy—they would have seen that their own moral theory, if logically followed out, could not really fit their moral practice. And, after all, it is a fundamental defect in any moral theory if it fails to render intelligible the lives and ideals of such men as they themselves were.

- 364 Any criticism of Utilitarianism would be more incomplete than need be, if it neglected to take account of the development of the principles of that school by Professor Sidgwick. Both the 'Perfectionist' and the Utilitarian are in agreement that the *Summum Bonum* is a desirable state of conscious existence; and Professor Sidgwick cannot see, if this be admitted, how to avoid
- 365 the conclusion that the *Summum Bonum* is pleasure. It would be unfair to say that Sidgwick equates "desirable state of consciousness" with "pleasure" through not being aware of the fallacy in Psychological Hedonism. His appeal is to common experience and common-sense. As rational beings, we are bound to aim at the good which = happiness, which = desirable consciousness, which = pleasure. While, for the original Utilitarians, such as Locke and Hume, reason had nothing to do with placing before us 'ends,' but only

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with working out means to the end we *do* pursue (namely pleasure), and while they would not have asked why, or whether, we *ought* to pursue pleasure, Sidgwick does raise this question of 'ought'; and he answers it by saying that reason pronounces pleasure desirable. Since we recognize it as a good, and because it is desirable, we ought to aim at procuring pleasure for all beings capable of enjoying it.

Sidgwick and others have charged our doctrine 366 (that the object of the good will is to be good) with moving in a vicious circle; and they profess to find in a Hedonistic conception of the moral end an escape from that circle. But does Sidgwick escape? No. For, as soon as he raises the question, not whether we do pursue pleasure, but whether we *ought* to, he becomes involved in the circle himself. In saying it is *reasonable* to pursue 'desirable consciousness,' does he mean, by desirable consciousness or pleasure, anything more than the sort of consciousness it is *reasonable* to seek? To describe this desirable consciousness as pleasure is only an apparent escape from the circle. For, either reason proposes ends, or it does not. If it does, then the *Summum Bonum* is not ultimately pleasurable feeling, but that which satisfies man's rational nature. If, on the other hand, reason does not propose ends (if, as the older Utilitarian said, it only suggests means to ends), then, again, pleasure cannot be the ultimate end, if we say that it is *reasonable* to seek it; for that would imply that pleasure is a *means* to a further end. On either alternative, pleasure cannot be the end.

Perhaps it is unfair to ascribe to anyone a course of 367-8 thought he would disavow, but it seems that Sidgwick, while really thinking of the good as the satisfaction of reason, shrank from the 'tautology' of saying that the

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end reason bids us seek is the satisfaction or perfection of rational nature itself.

Turning to Sidgwick's argument for Universalistic Utilitarianism—that because we recognize pleasure as good or desirable, we ought to aim at it for all who are capable of enjoying it—we cannot but feel there is a misconception here as to the implications of 'desirable' (or 'ought to be desired') as distinguished from 'desired.'

If we are asked whether pleasure is good, we naturally answer "yes"; and we so answer because we are conscious that it is something we desire for ourselves. Pleasure is a good as = the desired. But this is very different from saying it is necessarily *desirable* for us, much less that it is universally desirable. As it is actually desired by a man, it may very well be only desired for himself. He dislikes feeling pain, and prefers pleasure as such, to pain as such (i.e., other factors of his situation being left out of account). But this is *his* pleasure we are speaking about, and we are only speaking about it as something a man in those circumstances does, or naturally would, choose. But to say pleasure ought to be chosen, that it is not merely desired but *desirable* for self and for all rational beings, depends upon assuming the further proposition that the individual ought to desire for all others the possession of something, possession of which he conceives as a good to *him*.

This kind of argument is not confined to Sidgwick; we find something like it in Clarke and in Mill. Clarke says it is morally absurd to choose what is good for self, in opposition to the good for the greatest number, when it is mathematically obvious that the good of ten persons is greater than the good of one. But surely

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this implies that a man is able to regard 'the feeling pleased' of others in the same way as he regards the feeling pleased of himself—that he can have a "disinterested interest" in their welfare, and not merely an interest in it as affecting his own. This disinterested interest being granted by Universalistic Hedonism (or, at any rate, by Professor Sidgwick), the ultimate end is still to be conceived as the satisfaction of our rational nature, if it be said (as Sidgwick says) that it is reasonable, or desirable, or that we 'ought,' to seek pleasure. The question still remains, therefore, whether reason *can* ever find full satisfaction in such an end as pleasure. 369

Holding, as we do, that the end proposed by reason is the perfect development of our spiritual capacities, we certainly agree with Sidgwick that the end is a desirable form of conscious life; but it is a conscious life in which the production of spiritual qualities, and not a mere incidental accompaniment of that production, is the essential thing. What these qualities are we cannot fully know at present; but we know them to some extent through their having become partially embodied in civilized society; and, by aiming at rendering social conditions more favourable to the growth of these *recognized* excellences of character, we actually create the conditions under which the Best will become more fully known and more fully realized. 370-1

## APPENDIX

### NOTE A. GENERAL

Adequate criticism of Green would require to be extensive and detailed; but, as I cannot undertake such a task in a work primarily expository, I shall confine myself to commenting upon the most obvious difficulties in his system.

Now the two points at which he is most attacked are: (1) His Idealist metaphysics—i.e., the view that “self-consciousness” or “thought” is implied not only in our knowledge of objects but also in their existence; and (2) His “circle” in ethics—his definition of the object of the good will as the good will itself. Curiously enough, in both of these doctrines Green professes to build upon and advance beyond the position of Kant. Green’s points of departure are the Kantian doctrines that “the understanding makes nature,” and that “nothing is good without qualification but the good will.” We shall deal with these two subjects in the order noted.

#### I. THE METAPHYSICS OF KNOWLEDGE AND NATURE

The most difficult part of the *Prolegomena* to expound and criticize is Book I. Green’s critics, from Sidgwick on, have found it obscure and incoherent. With such criticisms I have a great deal of sympathy, and consequently I have found the work of exposition specially difficult. Yet, so far as a professed interpretation leaves any considerable part of an author unintelligible, the profession is but a sham and the ‘interpretation’ but a waste of paper and ink. Where one is unable to discover a coherent philosophical system, one can at least try to bring out the main tendency of an author’s thought, and then exhibit and explain any marked departure from this main tendency.

As I understand Green, the central doctrine of his metaphysics is that there is a spiritual principle in man and in nature. But I seem to find two distinct lines of argument,



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not necessarily consistent with each other, to establish this doctrine. I believe that, if this be recognized, the lack of coherence in Green's system becomes more intelligible. In my exposition, especially in Chapter I, I have emphasized what seemed to me to be Green's most fundamental argument, and I shall now attempt to deal with the outstanding difficulties.

The two lines of argument by which Green tries to establish the existence of a spiritual principle in nature are these :

(a) *The Argument Concerning the Relation of Subject and Object.*—There is a spiritual principle in knowledge; for, if we reflect on our experience of an objective world, we see that there could be no objective world *for us* did not *our* understanding exercise a synthetic, constructive activity in knowing. At the same time, we know that the objective world does not come into existence when we begin to think and perceive. Therefore, since *some* understanding or consciousness is required, and since our individual understandings do not meet the needs of the situation, there must be a Universal Self-consciousness which exists eternally and sustains the objective world in being.

(b) *The Argument Concerning 'Matter' and 'Form.'*—Reality is a whole, as the Naturalist affirms. Man and nature are of the one 'substance.' But man and nature are to be understood only on a 'Spiritualist' and not on a 'Materialist' view of reality. The Materialist or Naturalist view is that reality is a system or series of discrete atomic entities. But consider the activity called knowing. We can understand knowing only on the supposition that the contents of consciousness are a many-in-one. Therefore, as a systematic or teleological principle is implied in knowledge, there is in knowledge, at any rate, something more than a 'mere series.' But this same many-in-one-ness is found, not only in the knowing activity, but also in that which is known. The 'formal' principle of unity, in virtue of which alone a manifold 'matter' can be or become a *system*, operates throughout reality. True, we see what its character is most clearly in consciousness, but this principle cannot be less operative through the system of reality as a whole

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than it is in particular modes, expressions, or parts of reality. The more we insist, as the Naturalist does, on the identity of man and nature, the more obvious does it become that reality must be interpreted in 'spiritual' terms. And the spiritual principle of unity, or 'form' of reality, is as necessary to the manifold of 'matter,' as the matter is necessary to the form. The two are inseparable. This is clear with regard to sense data (the matter) and thought (the form of knowledge); reflection should make it equally obvious in all other cases.

Now these two lines of argument are, in many ways, very like each other. In both cases, we argue from the necessity of a principle for thought to its necessity for reality as a whole. But there is a real difference between the two. The first asserts that the objective world cannot exist apart from an experiencing subject; the second insists that 'matter' and 'form' are inseparable.

It is, perhaps, not very far wide of the mark to say that the first is commonly regarded as Green's most typical doctrine. To take the second as fundamental, however, seems to me to make his philosophy more intelligible on the whole; or, if it be thought that this is claiming too much, I think it can at least be shown that, on the one interpretation of Green (the interpretation which takes what I have called the 'first line of argument' as fundamental), his "deduction" of the Universal Self-consciousness is merely confused, and the conception of such a Consciousness an illegitimate and worthless addition to his system; while, on the other interpretation (i.e., taking the 'second line of argument' as fundamental), the conception of the Universal Self-consciousness is an essential feature of his system.

Let me try to show how, on the first interpretation, the argument for the Universal Self-consciousness breaks down.

Having argued that it is consciousness which constructs the object of perception, Green turns to face the objection that this reduces the world of fact to the mere fancy of the individual mind. Not so, he replies. We know that the

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world of nature, or the perceived world, does not come into existence when this or that individual begins to perceive and think. The world of fact is independent of him. But since it depends on some mind, there must be a Consciousness over and above the consciousness of this or that individual, sustaining the world of reality in being.

But this argument for the Universal Self-consciousness, as the necessary condition of the objective world, is hardly consistent with the sense in which Green has asked us to use the term "objectivity." Since the object is not the "existent external to the animal organism," nor the 'physical' stimulus which is but the "occasion" of the mind's beginning to construct to itself objects, then clearly the world of 'perceived objects', as a synthesis of 'meanings' and 'interpretations,' does and must depend upon the perceiving and thinking of this or that individual. "Perceived objects" are within *his* consciousness; and if he ceases to perceive and think, these 'objects' explode into nonentity, though the physical conditions, which hitherto were the "occasions" of his constructing such objects, may still persist. The world of "perceived objects" being thus within the individual consciousness, there is no need to suppose any other consciousness in which they can exist after he has died or gone to sleep. Those objects must necessarily cease to be, when he has ceased to think or perceive.

What useful purpose could the Universal Consciousness possibly serve? What "consciousness" operates upon is not "external existents" or "physical stimuli," but "sensations"; and sensations belong to the individual consciousness associated with this or that animal organism. If, then, the Universal Consciousness is, properly speaking, consciousness at all, it must 'work' upon sensations, and not upon external existents or physical stimuli. But what sensations are there for it to work upon? Certainly not ours, for they are the contents of and are dependent upon our consciousnesses. Yet the Universal Consciousness must be associated with some animal organism; for without such there can be, so far as we know, no sensations at all. But if the Universal Consciousness is associated with an

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animal organism, then it is one individual consciousness amongst others—a consciousness such as Green felt could not be the sustainer of the world of nature.

In short, to press, as Green does, Kant's dictum that the "Understanding makes nature," cannot possibly lead to any conclusion establishing the necessity for a Universal Self-consciousness. Indeed the logical conclusion would seem to be in some very different direction—either that there is no reality other than the contents of individual minds; or that there is some kind of reality or realities of which there cannot be any consciousness at all, inasmuch as such realities ("external existents" or "physical stimuli conditioning sensation") do not "enter into the object of consciousness."

This criticism seems to me a fair and reasonable one. Further, it reveals an inconsistency so serious as to render valueless any development of Green's principles which assumes the Universal Self-consciousness to exist, and we are forced to conclude that he showed much less caution and logical sensitiveness in his metaphysics than he showed in his subsequent analysis of the moral consciousness.

But all this, it should be remembered, goes on the assumption that the 'first line of argument' gives the essence of Green's position. My view is that the 'second line' is the fundamental one. It is more consistent with Green's general cast of mind; it is more consistent with his philosophy as a whole; it forms a more intelligible background to his specifically ethical doctrines; and it makes the Universal Self-consciousness not an illogical addition to, but an essential part of, his metaphysics.

Consider, for a moment, his general attitude of mind. In this connection, some passages in Nettleship's *Memoir* are exceedingly suggestive. The argument for the existence of a Universal Self-consciousness which is founded upon the 'object-constructing' view of consciousness leads Green frequently to emphasize the opposition between 'nature' and the 'non-natural' element in man. And yet we read that "What he most enjoyed in scenery was an upland prospect with some breadth of cultivated land. . . . Nature appealed to his imagination, not as it has done to

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some men, as a miracle of form and colour inviting and defying reproduction, nor, as it has done to others, as an elemental force in whose presence man finds peace by escaping from himself, but rather as the sympathetic background to human life and the kindred revelation of a divine intelligence.”<sup>1</sup> From amongst several other passages which might be quoted, I give the following, which occurs at the beginning of the chapter on Green's metaphysical principles: “The central conception is that the universe is a single eternal activity or energy, of which it is the essence to be self-conscious, that is, to be itself and not itself in one. Of this activity, ‘self-distinguishing and self-seeking,’ every particular existence is a limited manifestation, and, among other such existences, those which we call ‘ourselves.’ In so far as there is a ‘we’ at all and a world which can be called ‘ours,’ it is because the self which is the unity of the world is ‘communicated’ under the particular conditions of our physical organisation.”<sup>2</sup>

If we give much weight to passages such as these, as one would suppose we ought to, it seems that Green's real starting point was not a theory about the relation of understanding to its object, but a firmly rooted conviction of the unity of the universe. The contrasts which are so often emphasized—the contrast between the natural and the non-natural, the contrast between animal impulse and human motive—are apt to be taken as essential to his philosophy; yet Green was in agreement with the Naturalist who asserted an identity of principle in man and nature. Where he differed was in his view of what this principle is. According to him, it is spiritual. It may be the case that his method of showing how this principle operates in human knowledge (as a ‘construction of the object’) does not command our full assent; and it may be that, in trying to show how it operates in nature, he became involved in contradictions because of his theory of the relation of subject to object; but it is not true that his conviction that there is a Universal Self-consciousness depended solely on his belief that knowing is a construction of the objective world. Rather we may say that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

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because he believed in the Universal Self-consciousness—i.e., because he believed in a unitary reality (whose formative principle is therefore teleological)—that he was led to formulate a theory about the manner in which this principle operates in the individual consciousness.

Our real task, then, in trying to explain the inconsistencies in Green, is not to show how he came to embody the conception of a Universal Self-consciousness in his philosophical system, but rather to show how he came to hold any view of the understanding's function in knowing which renders the existence of this Consciousness useless or unintelligible; and why, beginning with a monistic theory of reality, he dwelt so much on the contrast between the natural and the spiritual.

In seeking to understand these peculiarities in Green's thought, we should bear in mind at least these three powerful influences on the direction and tone of his argument:

(1) Many of the sharp contrasts set up by Green become intelligible when we remember the type of philosophy against which he was reacting. Physical science, biology and anthropology were being diligently studied in his day; and the assumption of rational connection throughout the universe is implied in every attempt to understand the world, or any part of it. But many of the metaphysicians who evolved their systems with special regard to the assumptions of physical science took the view that the assumption of rational connection excludes all notion of purposiveness from the universe. On this question Green rightly took issue with them. The categories of mechanism and teleology are not contradictory but complementary. I cannot stay to defend this view. It is sufficient to point out that it is the view Green pressed against Naturalism. But—and this is how some of his unnecessarily sharp contrasts arise—Green often relaxes the full force of his contention, and seems to allow to his opponents that mechanism is the last word about the natural order. He seems at some points, e.g., to agree that nature is merely a series of events, and to set in opposition to 'nature' self-consciousness which is not a mere series. So, too, in reply to the biologists and

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anthropologists, who, first of all, attribute to animals merely a collection of unintelligent instincts, and then go on to interpret man in terms of this 'animal nature,' Green sometimes appears to say, "What you affirm about animals may be, and probably is true; but it is not true of man. Therefore there is in him some non-animal intelligence which supervenes upon his animal equipment." I believe that, had Green's own fundamental principles been applied with absolute thoroughness (a thoroughness it is hardly fair to expect in the circumstances), these oppositions he countenances would not be confirmed, but would be much softened or completely discarded.

(2) But, besides the effect exercised upon Green's argument by his opposition to Naturalism, there is also the effect exercised by the type of philosophy in which he found much inspiration. He was a neo-Kantian, strongly influenced by the Hegelian development of Kant's position, and he applied the doctrines and arguments advanced in the *Critique* to solve a problem which was not quite the same as Kant's, though the two problems were closely akin and might easily be confused. Green's real problem at the beginning was not concerned with the relation of subject to object, but with the question whether the universe can be conceived in teleological terms. "What (he asked) is the Formative principle in the Matter of the Universe, and can the Matter exist apart from the Form?" But this "problem of Form and Matter" gradually passed over in his mind into the "problem of the relation of subject to object," just because the kind of formative principle he was anxious to exhibit he found most clearly operative in the experience of 'knowing.' Beginning with the question, "What formative principle must we attribute to reality, if reality is a genuinely self-determined and coherent system?" (the answer being, "Reality is not a collection of atoms, but an organic or teleological whole"), he transformed this into the question, "What is implied in a subject's becoming aware of the objective world?" His final conclusion is that "it is the consciousness of a subject which is the formative principle of the objective world—the understanding makes nature." In other words, having

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found a formula to fit the relation of sense data (the matter) to thought (the form) in the subject's knowing, he went on to argue that, either sense data do not involve anything outside the thinking subject; or, if they do, the thinking in a subject is the formative principle for the 'external' conditions of sense data as well as for the sense data themselves. What Green really wanted to say is that the synthetic principle in our thinking is only one manifestation of a principle operative everywhere. But, finding that the problem of the relation of sense data to thought is a particular case of his general problem of form and matter, he argued as if this were the same as saying that the problem of form and matter is the problem of the relation between the subject and the objective world. Just so far as he confused these two issues, just so far as he implied that understanding in the knowing subject makes nature for us, to that extent he has of course supplied the formative principle of nature from the consciousness of the individual subject, and there is no function for his universal spiritual principle or Universal Self-consciousness to perform.

Green was seeking a formative principle immanent in the matter—the form existing only so far as it informed the matter, the matter existing only so far as it materialized the form. What he has actually supplied us with, however, in his theory that the understanding makes nature, is a form separable from the matter, and therefore a matter separable from the form, in spite of his denial that this is so. This separateness comes out in two ways.

In the first place, Green substantializes 'consciousness,' or the 'synthetic unity of apperception,' to such an extent that he thinks of mind or consciousness as something which can exist apart from body. To him, a future life, after the life on earth and the death of the body, was a perfectly reasonable hypothesis. In rejecting such a possibility, Bosanquet was carrying Green's central principles to a more logical conclusion.

In the second place, in spite of all his struggles to banish the supposition, Green never entirely rid himself of the 'superstition' that there is some kind of 'material' in



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experience which is independent of consciousness. Consider, for instance, the following paragraphs (summarized)

-51 There may be beings who feel but do not think; but so far as we feel without thinking no real world exists for *our* consciousness. Of course we and our feelings do not cease to be facts, but they are facts only for some other consciousness. That a great part of our sensitive life is not determined by *our* thought is not in dispute; but it is determined by relations which can only exist for *some* consciousness—the Universal Self-consciousness.

-65 The reason why we suppose that facts or perceived objects can exist apart from consciousness is that we confuse "perceived object" with "exciting cause of sensation." The exciting cause of sensation is never the object perceived. We say that the objects we know are the products of a synthetizing consciousness. What exactly is synthetized? No feeling as such, no exciting cause of sensation as such ever enters into the perceived object—not even the present sensation which we admit to be a necessary condition of perception. It is not the *sensation*, but the *fact that* such sensation is here and now occurring, which forms the nucleus round which recalled experiences are synthetized. Hence objects of experience—this flower, this dog—in the only sense in which they are objects to us, have their being only for, and result from the action of, a self-distinguishing consciousness.

From paragraphs 48-51, it seems that, for Green, there may be elements in *our* sensitive life not determined by *our* thought; i.e. the "matter" may exist apart from the "form." And yet it is the inseparability of sense data and thought in the knowing subject which presents the 'clearest case' for the inseparability of matter and form throughout the whole of reality, and hence for the existence of a spiritual principle in nature as well as in thought. But if *our* sense data are externally related to or are a given manifold to *our* consciousness, there should surely be no difficulty in regarding them as independent of *all* consciousness.

An even more curious suggestion is conveyed in para-

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graphs 59-65. It is said that, while the perceived object is constituted by consciousness, the exciting cause of sensation forms no element in that object. It is apparently outside consciousness altogether. Yet, being an 'occasion' or 'exciting cause' of sensation it is surely not non-existent. Green has slain the thing-in-itself. Is Banquo's ghost the only one which has ever come back to haunt a murderer?

It is apparent, at least, that, in the end, the application of Kant's dictum, "the understanding makes nature," does not fully satisfy the demands Green makes upon it; and the explanation I have suggested is that Kant's and Green's central problems were not precisely the same. Kant was trying to meet the sceptical implications of Hume's theory of knowledge, and to show that the categories of causality, etc., employed by the scientific investigator, are presupposed in all experience. Green's primary problem, on the other hand, was not to justify the employment of these categories—his opponents, indeed, were only too willing to take this justification for granted—but to show that they do not at all render unjustifiable the use of the category of purpose. Beginning with a conviction of the unity of the universe, and the belief that any 'system' in knowledge, nature, or reality as a whole, implies a certain kind of principle, he felt that "Universal Self-consciousness" best describes the nature of this principle operating throughout reality. For such a view a very great deal may be said. The 'form' or organizing principle in reality must be analogous to the organizing principle in any particular self-conscious subject. One would think it must be identical in character with that principle in a subject. And "matter" and "form," one might argue, are inseparable.

But it would not in the least follow from this that the form in the subject is the formative principle of the matter in the objective world. Green's great mistake (and the source of so much of the incoherence in his metaphysics) was that, finding in the Kantian philosophy a clear indication of the operation of this principle in knowledge, he argued as though the Kantian philosophy, with its tail (where the sting was located) chopped off, becomes trans-

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formed from a theory of knowledge into a system of metaphysics.

(3) There is a third consideration which must always be borne in mind by anyone who attempts to expound and criticize Green's philosophy. Strictly speaking, Green should have regarded his Universal Self-consciousness as a principle wholly immanent in reality; but certain habits of thought, deriving from early religious influences, pre-disposed him to think largely in terms of a transcendent creative mind.<sup>1</sup> The 'theistic' and the 'pantheistic' ideas which struggled together in his mind never quite fought the battle out to a finish. This is shown by the unexpected turn he sometimes gives to an argument, and by expressions and conceptions occurring at frequent intervals throughout the *Prolegomena*. Unless we keep this fact in view, we shall be tempted to seek elaborate explanations for these unexpected turns of thought, when their grounds are quite simple and straightforward.

### II. THE GOOD WILL

Turning to the other doctrine of Green which "builds upon and advances beyond Kant"—the view that the object of the good will is the good will itself—we find Green stating emphatically that the moralist cannot escape from this circular definition of the good will. Two principal reasons for this are given: (a) that the object of the good will must be non-competitive, and (b) that the ordinary moral consciousness itself asserts the good will to be the one unconditioned good.

(a) In tracing the development of moral progress, Green's contention was that, wherever there arises a moral sense or the distinction between virtue and vice, there must at the same time be the notion of a common good as that towards which the virtuous will is directed. Most goods are competitive, gain for one person involving loss for another; and this is obviously the case as regards material

<sup>1</sup> My attention has been drawn to this side of Green's thought by Dr. C. C. J. Webb. See also page 211.

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goods. It may hold even with regard to the pursuit of such 'goods' as art, science and philosophy, in the sense that for one man to enjoy these pursuits may involve considerable self-sacrifice on the part of others. Indeed there is only one good which can never be competitive, and that is the possession of moral character. Hence, if the good is to be non-competitive, it can be nothing other than the development and possession of the good will itself.

Now Green is clearly right in saying that the pursuit of good moral character cannot be competitive. But why? Simply because the good or virtuous will is the will to the common good; i.e., it is the will or disposition to balance and harmonize competing interests. If I contemplate a certain possible business transaction which will enrich me and leave my neighbours poorer than they are, and if I bring the matter to a moral test, my 'conscience' pronounces such an action vicious. It would be treating my neighbours unfairly; it would be selfish; it would be removing, for personal aggrandisement, opportunities they might have had for realizing their interests. The virtuous course would be to treat them as *persons* (i.e. as beings who are capable of pursuing ends which they present to themselves as good), keeping scrupulously within a balanced system of rights, allowing each person as much opportunity as possible for following what he himself takes to be good.

The good will, then, is the will to secure equal partition or distribution of opportunities; and hence the effort to achieve such an habitual will cannot be an object competitive like other objects—like those, e.g., for the pursuit of which we are anxious to secure equality of opportunity. The effort after the production of the good will is the effort after a non-competitive good, just because the good will is the will to balance competing interests.

Now this good will—this will to balance competing interests—is not directed primarily (if at all) to itself or its own production. It is directed to the balancing of interests and claims, to a partition of goods which are not virtues. The good will aims, in a world of claims and counter-claims, at giving each person as much oppor-

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tunity as possible of attaining to self-realization (in Green's language) or happiness (in Utilitarian language). This self-realization or maximum of unimpeded activity can certainly be called "perfection of being," but it is not perfection in the narrow sense of virtuous character. It is perfection in the sense of "being and doing all that a man desires to be and to do."

It is important to notice that Green himself often departs from the conception of the object of the good will as the good will itself. In paragraph 247, e.g., he speaks of the good will as having practically the same function as we have just assigned to it. And from his repeated explanation that the object of the good will is not an "abstract idea of virtue" but an interest in the common good, it is fairly certain that he felt some weakness in this part of his system. The weakness was not clear to Green himself, largely because of an ambiguity in his use of the term "perfection." "Perfection," for him, sometimes means "moral perfection" or the "possession of the virtuous will"; and at other times it means "the full realization of all those capacities and interests proper to human nature."

If we make perfection in this second sense the end (as Green himself so often does), then we avoid his "circle" entirely. Every man, we may say, has his own interests and desires. "The poorest he hath a life to live in England as well as the richest he"; and to treat him as a person or 'end-in-himself' is to regard him as a subject of ends, and to give practical effect to that recognition. This practical recognition consists in giving him as much opportunity as possible for pursuing his ends. Of course he cannot be allowed to do everything he wishes to do, because his claims conflict at times with those of others. When claims thus conflict, the moral will acts as a court of arbitration. It attempts to strike a balance. Those claims which finally emerge with approval are called rights. The creation of a right automatically creates a duty—the duty not to interfere with the exercise of that right. Duties are primarily negative, and if all men were independent of each other, economically, etc., all duties would simply be rules of non-interference. But because we are not independent—

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because man's pursuit of his interests in society always involves aid from others, and because there must be fair exchange if there is to be no robbery—duties acquire a positive, not merely a negative content. To the conscientious man who occasionally catches a glimpse of all that he owes to his society, an infinite number of duties will appear as binding on himself—duties which more thoughtless men would never dream of performing, nor think much the less of him for neglecting. Of course "virtue," in the widest sense, includes more than the performance of what is clearly a duty. There is such a thing as the gift of free grace, following from the same fundamental interest as the dutiful action—the interest in the welfare of persons as persons.

But I must not allow these notes to develop into an independent discussion of the nature of virtue. The main point I am stressing is that the moral will is not directed primarily to its own development (i.e., not to securing 'perfection for all' in the sense of 'the good will in all'), but to securing the "perfection" or "self-realization" of all, in the sense of securing to all opportunities for the pursuit of those ends they cherish and desire to realize, so far as practical wisdom can see those pursuits fitting into a balanced scheme of rights.

(b) Now Green certainly develops, at times, this view of the end as "perfection" in the sense of "full self-realization"; and we see that it does not involve any "circle." But, as certainly, he often speaks of the circle as inevitable, and regards "perfection" as "the good will." Why did he not accept, once and for all, the obvious way out? Because he accepted Kant's dictum, that "nothing is good without qualification but the good will," as a simple, indisputable deliverance of the ordinary moral consciousness whose judgments ethics is not concerned to approve or disapprove, but simply to understand and explain.

We must agree that, if this is a genuine deliverance of the moral consciousness, then Green is perfectly right. It must be accepted as a fact for ethics, and the 'circle' is inevitable. But is it a genuine deliverance? We shall find reasons for believing that it is not. There are deliver-

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ances—any number of them—which sound very like it, and these no doubt are what attracted the attention of Kant and Green. Jeanie Deans would not lie to save her sister, but would travel to London to do it. A man would rather die than betray a trust. Another will endure poverty with honesty rather than enjoy dishonourable riches. Thus we conclude that, for such persons, virtue is regarded as an unconditioned good, and certainly superior to material goods.

But, with regard to a person faced with a choice of this sort, it only obscures the issue to say that he is choosing between 'virtue' and 'material good.' True, the alternatives are often described in this way, but 'virtue' and 'material good' must *mean* something; and, if one reflects on what the content of these concepts is, one sees that the alternative 'ends' proposed are not, on the one hand, "the production of a virtuous will," and, on the other, "the production of a material good." The alternatives are, rather, the "production of something which conduces to social well-being," and the "production of something which conduces to one's own well-being, irrespective of its harmful effects on others." Both the alternative ends proposed may be in fact 'material goods.' The 'virtuous will' is not necessarily part of the content (much less is it the principal content) of what is to be produced. The virtuous will is *expressed* or *revealed* in the choice of one end rather than the other; for by 'virtue' we *mean* the disposition to act socially and not merely selfishly.

In the sphere of practical moral reflection and choice, the 'virtue' attained or expressed in renouncing a particular good (or lost in accepting it) does not, I should imagine, appear to the healthy moral consciousness as the real alternative to the renounced good. That virtue takes its 'virtuous' character, as Green himself has said, from the end or good aimed at. When a man chooses 'honesty with poverty' rather than dishonourable wealth, he is faced with a situation where it is clear that a lie will be to his gain but to others' loss; truth will gain him little, but will preserve the rights and opportunities of others. It is because one or other of these two sets of effects follows from his action

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that, *assuming him to have known* which set would follow, we judge him vicious or virtuous. The virtue of an action comes to it from its effects in a certain context, so far as those effects and that context were foreknown to the agent. The real alternatives between which a man chooses are not 'virtue' and 'wealth,' but 'securing a good for all' and 'securing a good merely for self.' It pertains to the dignity of human nature that it can make the former an end. But the sacrifice involved in considering the good of others (as Green himself says), and the honesty attributed to the act (as he does not say so clearly), both have reference to and draw their character from their relation to the welfare and happiness of other persons. The individual need not be thinking, in making the sacrifice, of producing 'virtue' in himself or in those others. But he *must* be thinking, if his action is to have any virtue at all, of making it more possible for them to be happy. He must be aiming at securing for them opportunities for 'self-realization'; and it is not at all necessary that these opportunities should be primarily for the exercise of their virtue. His moral perspective is likely to be more healthy if he is not bothering his head about making them 'good,' but is concerning himself with what, as ordinary human beings, they need; and their needs can never be properly understood without taking account of what they actually say they want. Am I entitled to spend so much money on building up a private library if a poor friend could secure beneficial medical treatment for the money? Does the fact that I have an assured income from capital investments mean that there is no obligation on me to do some definitely useful work for society? These are the typical problems the moral consciousness is called upon to settle—raising questions of honesty, fairness, public-spiritedness and selfishness in connection with the possession and bestowal of goods which are not virtue, but are mainly competitive and often 'material' goods. The virtue is brought into being and revealed by the way in which a man deals with such questions.

What bearing has all this upon Kant's dictum about the good will? It means that virtue is not, according to the



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moral consciousness, the only thing good without qualification. It is not indeed an unqualified or unconditional good at all. Nothing is. Many things are good as ends, not merely as means, but they are not unqualifiedly or unconditionally good. To look at a beautiful sunset is something good as an end, not merely as a means; but it is not unconditionally good, for there may be a madman approaching me from the east who will do me grievous bodily harm unless I leave the sunset to look after itself and turn round to attend to him.

Certainly, the development of a 'virtuous character' may be pursued as an end. I may wish to become the kind of person who habitually "does the handsome thing" But being virtuous or doing the handsome thing, *means* something, and I have tried to suggest what it does mean.

Certainly, too, virtue is good in every possible context, and perhaps nothing else is. But virtue always has a context, and hence is not unconditionally good. It is always good in any context, because it is a quality of will which harmonizes competing claims to other ends; and, were those other goods not antecedently desired, virtue would have absolutely no value or significance, for there would be no such thing as virtue.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The positive alternative to Green's theory of the good will which I should offer would perhaps meet with as much criticism as Green's own. But, so far as my principal criticism of his view is concerned, there is probably much more agreement among students of the *Prolegomena*. "In concluding that the object of the good will is the good will itself, Green has been ostensibly tracing the development in the *content* of the good will; and (illegitimately) he finds the culminating point of the 'content' of the good will in the 'form' of the good will" (Prof. C. A. Campbell, in unpublished notes).

## NOTE B. ON THE CONCEPTION OF REALITY AS A SYSTEM OF UNALTERABLE RELATIONS.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the *Prolegomena*, in order to explain how (if the objective world is constituted by relations, and if relations are constituted by thought) we are to distinguish between our mere fancies or subjective illusions and real objective fact, Green tells us that the distinction between subjective illusion and objective reality is equivalent to the distinction between the assertion of relations which are alterable, and the assertion of relations which are unalterable; for our conception of reality is essentially the conception of an order of unalterable relations.

To emphasize this conception of reality as "a system of *unalterable* relations" would have interrupted our exposition of Green's main position. At the same time the notion raises questions of considerable importance, and I have thought it best, therefore, to deal with the subject in a note. I shall first summarize what Green has to say, and then offer a few comments.

Objective reality is a system of terms-in-relation. Every 13-5  
attempt to understand the objective world takes the form of attributing relations between this term and that; and, whether we judge truly or falsely, our judgment takes the form of imputing relations.

How, then, do we distinguish between true and false judgments? An important presupposition of all our thinking is that the real relations between things are unalterable relations. We may say that by 'reality' is meant a system of unalterable relations.

This conception of reality was evidently, if unconsciously, 21-5  
present to Locke's mind. What he *meant* to oppose to the real was not the work of the mind as such, but the relating work of the mind as assumed to be *arbitrary*; thus indicating, without however accepting, the true conception of reality as a single and unalterable system of relations. In trying to decide whether any particular object is what it seems to be, we do so by testing the unalterability of the qualities or relations we have ascribed to it.

<sup>1</sup> See page 37.

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Though Green's description of reality as a system of unalterable relations certainly draws attention to a point of philosophical importance, it is in some ways unfortunate. Relations can and do alter; and indeed their alteration is a condition of the growth of our knowledge. Did our relations to things not change, we should know very little about them. If, in looking at a penny, I could not alter my relations to it, its shape would always appear to me to be the same. I should always see it, say, as a circle. To another it would always appear as an ellipse; to a third it would always appear as a thin rod. Our judgments about it would be unintelligible to each other. Or, to take an example from relations which are not spatial. I may be related to a man as son to father. Later I may be related to him as employee to employer; still later I may be related to him as junior to senior partner; and finally I shall cease to be related to him at all when one or other of us dies.

Things and individuals, then, do alter their relations. Yet Green seems to deny this when he says that what a thing's relations are now they are unalterably. What led him to hold this position?

We shall get at the truth in his view if we make a provisional distinction between a thing and its appearances to us, neglecting, for the moment, Green's main contention that *reality* is a system of unalterable relations, and confining our attention to the connection between *appearances* and relations. Taking the example of looking at a penny, we said that if I could not alter my relations to it, it would always have the same appearance to me. Change the relations and *that* appearance drops out of existence, another taking its place. An appearance may come to be or cease to be; but so long as it is, it implies the existence of one and only one set of relations. The proof of this proposition that "the relations of an appearance (or, as Green would say, the relations constituting an appearance) are unalterable," in the sense that the appearance implies just those relations and no other, is not made out by showing that in every case we have found this to be so. In many cases it is superficially not so. But the conviction that it *must* be so is responsible for the creation of those extraordinarily

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delicate instruments used in scientific experiment. The proposition is the statement of an assumption implied in all scientific investigation. To abandon it would be to abandon all science.

We thus see that Green's conception of a "system of unalterable relations" is essentially the same as Kant's conception of "causality." The statement that "what relations are they are unalterably," is just another form of the statement that "every event has a cause, and every event has an effect." Assuming the operation of the principle of causality, the scientist proceeds to discover what in particular is the cause or effect of a certain particular event. Or, in Green's terms, assuming the unalterable system of relations, the scientist proceeds to enquire what is the (unalterable) relation between this term and that.

But it must not be forgotten that, in all this, we have been speaking of the connection between relations and appearances. Having distinguished between the appearances and the thing appearing, we have said that, while the appearances cannot alter their relations, the thing itself can. My spatial relations to the penny change as its appearances to me change; and just as the penny may have many appearances, so an individual may have many 'personae.' A man's 'persona' as employer is bound up with his relation to someone else as employee; but he does not disappear if he abandons this 'persona.' The real difficulty in Green is that he wishes to apply the proposition valid of appearances to the reality which in them appears. *Reality*, he says, is a system of unalterable relations; and it is difficult to agree to this without denying the obvious fact that things do change their relations. It almost seems as if Green's 'advance' upon Kant takes the form of denying what Kant held—namely that the category of "substance" is a presupposition as necessary for our thought as the category of "causality."

In order to make his doctrine plausible, Green is forced to bring in the conception of implicit or potential relations; and this will not do. Let us consider his own example<sup>1</sup> of the hill appearing near today and remoter yesterday.

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, paragraph 24.

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We can agree with him that the appearance of the hill today is bound up with its relations; but it is not true that the hill itself necessarily involves just those relations. To say that the appearance of the hill necessarily involves my perceiving, plus certain atmospheric conditions, is not to say that the existence of the hill itself is thus conditioned. The present state of the atmosphere, e.g., may pass out of existence, another taking its place. With its disappearance, its relation to the hill necessarily disappears, for it can leave no relation behind it. The hill itself, however, does not cease to be. With new atmospheric conditions it appears in a new form. To say that the relation of the hill to the new state of the atmosphere was eternally real, as a *potential* relation, is saying no more than that it is possible for the hill to be so related, and, when so related, to have a certain appearance, though at present it does not have that relation or appearance.

The conclusion, then, is that, while an appearance necessarily involves those relations with which it is actually bound up, the real which appears does not involve unalterable relations, much less can it be said to be merely a system of unalterable relations.

Green charges Kant with inconsistency in positing a thing-in-itself outside consciousness, and in allowing consciousness to 'construct' only the phenomenal world. It is because he is so anxious to reduce the noumenal to the phenomenal that Green wants to say of reality what he can say of its appearances—that it is constituted by unalterable relations. But if one considers what appearances are, one must acknowledge that, whatever difficulties there may be in his system, Kant held on to certain aspects of the truth which Green neglected.

An appearance of a thing is an appearance *of* the thing. It depends on three factors: the character of the thing, its relation to other things, and its relation to the observer. To agree that the second and third of these factors are necessary conditions, is not to deny or to rule out the suggestion that the first is also a necessary condition. The thing itself, then, cannot be identified with any one or any sum of its appearances, for it is one of the three factors which

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make those appearances possible. It is substantive, whilst they are adjectival. The appearance, however, is not an adjective or quality inherent in the thing in its own right. The appearance belongs to it only so far as the other factors are also present; and if we ask what the thing is apart from those relations and appearances, the answer is that we do not know, for we can never know anything except so far as it appears to us.

It may be retorted that we are only reviving here old confused theories which it is the merit of Idealism to have exposed—bringing back the ‘unknowable thing-in-itself,’ and saying that reality is unknowable, and that what we can know (its appearances) is unreal. But this is hardly the implication of what we have said. What we know is not appearances but reality. We know reality as it appears to us; or, if one likes to put the matter so, our knowing reality is its appearing to us. The question we were asked was not, “Do we know the thing itself?” but “What is it apart from its appearances?” and we simply answered that we do not know. To say we do not know it apart from the way in which it appears to us is very different from saying that it is unknown or unknowable.

All theory of knowledge begins by accepting as a datum that we do in fact experience and know the real world. Philosophy begins to reflect on this fact and attempts to understand its implications. At first, we think in terms of a world of objects whose qualities—shape, size, colour, value, etc.—are intrinsic to the things themselves. Doubt is thrown on this view when it becomes clear that Tertiary and Secondary qualities are not intrinsic. Then Kant proceeds to show that Primary qualities also are relative to the observer. Space and time are forms of our perception; and we have no right to attribute spatial character to things apart from their relation to our perception of them.

Reaching this point we have to proceed warily, or we shall land in Subjective Idealism. What is involved in Kant’s position? Simply this, that, in ‘looking at things in space,’ *we* are there, looking. We cannot leave the ‘looking’ out of account when trying to say what the thing would be apart from our perception of it. In fact, he shows that



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the whole question "What characteristics do things possess apart from our experience and knowledge of them?" is futile; for it is a question we cannot answer. The older 'speculative metaphysics' attempted this, and that is why it was so unsatisfactory. Any character we predicate of reality can be significantly predicated only if it is a deduction from our experience of reality; and we can experience reality only in the form in which it appears, its appearances to us being determined partly by our own nature. To ask how things would look if we were not looking at them, or what we do know of them when we don't know them, is nonsense. Yet this is the question we put, when we ask what reality is apart from its appearances to us.

Now it is this aspect of the truth which Idealists like Green have stressed. But they proceed to identify two very different propositions: "Reality cannot be known apart from knowledge or consciousness of it," and "Reality cannot exist apart from knowledge or consciousness of it." The first proposition, however, does not necessarily involve the second. In fact, while the first is obviously true, the second is in flat opposition to one of the primary conditions of all knowledge. When we reflect on knowledge or attempt to increase knowledge, we assume that there is something there to be known. We assume that the thing can be, even if we do not know it. In knowing a thing, we know *that* it is, and also to some extent *what* it is. Certainly, if we did not know it to some extent, we could neither know nor assume even *that* it is, much less could we know *what* it is. But once we do know it, we necessarily assume that it is and was, independent of our knowing. That is to say, reflection upon our knowledge of things always presupposes that we do in fact know them; but in philosophizing upon the grounds of knowledge, we are bound to postulate an objective as well as a subjective ground. We are bound to postulate a 'thing itself' as well as a conscious observer. The thing itself is a 'transcendental ground' of experience, in the same sense as the category of causality and the synthetic unity of apperception are transcendental grounds. Analysis of the nature of experience shows that without this thing itself, experience would be impossible.

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This whole discussion arose out of Green's conception of reality as a system of unalterable relations. We agree that the relations of appearances are unalterable; but a thing may appear in different ways, i.e., its relations are alterable. Even if we substitute for "system of unalterable relations" the description of reality as a "system of terms unalterably related," the objection to Green's view still holds. If these 'terms' are 'appearances,' then they imply that which appears; if they are 'that which appears,' then their relations are alterable.

This conception of reality propounded by Green leads logically to the extreme 'Absolutism' of Bradley and Bosanquet, which ascribes genuine 'individuality' only to the 'Whole,' and rejects (while Green<sup>1</sup> wished to defend, in his moral theory at any rate) the notion of 'finite individuality.' But the notion of 'finite individuality' (the idea of a 'substance' which is not a mere meeting-point of qualities or relations, but a 'something' which changes its relations without ceasing to be) is necessary to explain experience. If we build up a system of metaphysics by taking account only of the *subjective* ground of experience—the "transcendental unity of apperception"—we are bound to reach the Absolutist position, because the "demand" from the subjective side is that the contents of knowledge should be unified in the *one* consciousness. But Absolutism is satisfactory neither as a metaphysical system nor as a background for moral theory, because it denies finite individuality; and surely its defects are apparent even in the epistemological sphere. If relations are alterable, as they obviously are, then objects or things are not merely meeting-points of relations. And if things are not merely meeting-points of relations, then they have an individuality or 'substantiality' of their own. Hence the conception of "things-in-themselves" is an "objective transcendental ground of knowledge," quite apart from any argument which might be brought forward from the side of ethics.

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena*, paragraphs 180-4.

## NOTE C. ON THE CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to both knowledge and morality, Green holds that development implies the eternal existence of the perfection towards which the developing process is tending. The growth of our wisdom implies an eternally all-wise consciousness, and our growth in goodness implies an eternally perfect being. As I understand him, Green does not deduce this implication from anything peculiar to knowledge and morality. The eternal perfection of knowledge and morality is implied because the development of knowledge and morality in us are instances of development or evolution in general.

It is true that Green puts forward two supplementary arguments, one concerning knowledge and the other concerning morality.

With regard to the argument concerning knowledge, Green refers us to the supposed necessity for postulating a spiritual principle in nature as well as in knowledge. Self-consciousness or the Understanding is the source not only of the perception but also of the existence of objects; and since *our* consciousness does not bring objects into being, there must be an eternal self-consciousness. This eternal self-consciousness must be all-wise, since every possible object of our knowledge must fall within it. We have already<sup>2</sup> suggested reasons for believing that the whole foundation of this argument is fallacious.

With regard to the supplementary argument concerning morals, it is, briefly, that the distinction between 'good' and 'better' implies the notion of a 'Best.' All relative distinctions imply the existence of an absolute standard, it is held. But, as Green himself strenuously contends<sup>3</sup> in his subsequent criticism of Utilitarianism, this is not true. It certainly does not hold with regard to pleasure, space and time. We can conceive one sum of pleasures as relatively greater than another, while "the greatest possible sum" is unmeaning. We can say the third finger is longer than

<sup>1</sup> See pages 60 ff.    <sup>2</sup> Pages 181-3.    <sup>3</sup> Paragraphs 358-9

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the fourth, without being able to conceive a greatest possible length.

Now if the relative does not imply the absolute in these cases, what ground have we for supposing that it does so anywhere? It is the comparison of goods with each other, not the comparison of goods with a Best which gives rise to the distinction between better and worse. Certainly, if we define good as 'that which satisfies desire or need,' the notion of complete satisfaction is an absolute standard by reference to which we distinguish the better from the worse, the more from the less good. But this absolute standard is subjective, not objective. It is a subjective, regulative idea, not an objective existent. It is the conception of something which is possible, which may yet be; not necessarily the conception of something which eternally is.

Now, if we wish to hold, with Descartes, that the notion of perfection implies its existence, or that that which is possible must in some sense be eternally real, we have moved away from Green's two supplementary arguments to his central one, namely that any process of development implies the eternal existence of the perfection of that process.

The general argument is this: Any evolution or development towards an end implies the eternal presence of the end in the developing process; for, if that end is not somehow in control, we have not a development but a mere series of changes from one state to another. The full perfection of manhood is present in the earliest forms of animal life; otherwise man could not possibly have evolved out of those earlier forms. Humanity was there not explicitly, but implicitly.

Admittedly, it is difficult to say accurately what development is, and to explain the relation of the final stage to the earlier. But one thing is very clear, and that is that the final stage or perfection is not there from the beginning to the end. The final stage is the final stage, and if it were there from the beginning there would have been no development or evolution at all. All Green is really showing is that there must be some 'identity' persisting through the changing stages. There certainly must be some identity, but the

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identity persisting throughout cannot possibly be the final or perfect fulfilment.

It may be replied that, while not present actually, the end was always present potentially, and hence existed as an 'eternal reality.' Now, if this means only that from the beginning of life it was possible for men to develop out of lower forms of animal life, no one is concerned to dispute such an assertion. The fact that men have evolved shows that it was possible. But if it is desired to maintain something more—if it be maintained that, because it was possible for men to evolve, they *were* from the beginning as eternal realities—that they were 'real' though they did not 'actually exist'—this is a form of 'mysterious philosophy' which is bound to lead to confusion. Philosophers like Green, Bradley and Bosanquet have made great use of this distinction between 'actual existence' and 'reality,' but it is a distinction impossible to maintain. These writers continually fall back upon the more natural sense of the word 'reality' as equivalent to the 'actually existing' Green, e.g. (*Prolegomena*, paragraph 131), permits himself to oppose the "existing merely in consciousness" to the "reality of actual existence"; and if it were not for the confusions of thought due to the initial separation and later identification of the real and the actual, no one would ever have dreamed of asserting that the end of a developing process must somehow be eternally real.

Certainly, a development must be conceived as the development through different stages of an identical thing; but the identical thing which develops through different stages cannot be that final stage which is the end of the development. What the thing ultimately becomes cannot be that which has persisted through the process of becoming. The real difficulty in the concept of evolution is not to see how the end can be eternally real (for it cannot be), but to understand what is meant by the identical thing which develops through different stages. Our problem is the problem of 'identity,' not the so-called problem of relating 'eternal reality' to 'actual existence.'

[For the defence of Green's general contention, consult Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, especially Chapters XVIII,

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XXIV and XXVI; Bosanquet's *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, Chapters VIII and X; Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State*, Chapter V; Bosanquet's *Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy*, Chapters II and III; and H. W. B. Joseph's *Concept of Evolution*.]

## NOTE D. ON EFFECTS, INTENTION AND MOTIVE<sup>1</sup>

In the text I have given a very free rendering of Green's doctrine of the moral judgment, but am satisfied that, while my rendering is not exactly what Green says, it is a fair representation of his conclusions so far as they affect his general moral theory. His conception of the relation of the moral judgment to effects, intentions and motives is, however, sufficiently peculiar to warrant further treatment.

The first point we shall consider is his contention<sup>2</sup> that the moral judgment refers ultimately not to the intention but to the motive. Apparently Green considered the intention as the proximate and the motive as the more remote end—the 'motive-end' being related to 'intention-end' as 'end' is related to 'means.' If I play a stroke in a game of golf, it may truly be said that my intention was to hit the ball, and my motive to place it as near as possible to the hole in the green. But it may with equal truth be said that my intention was to place the ball near the hole, and my motive to win the game. It is clear, then, that Green's distinction between motive and intention is one of degree or comprehensiveness rather than one of kind. The intention and the motive are both ideal situations to be realized by effort, the motive-end standing to the intention-end as end stands to means.

Is it, then, true to say that we always judge the action, morally, by the motive, rather than by the intention? I do not think it is true. If I push a man in order to get him out of danger, my action is good. If I push him in order that he may fall into the water and drown, my action is bad. In both cases the intention (to push him) is the same, but there is a difference of motive, and we judge by the motive. But there are cases where we judge by intention rather than by motive. If I require a sum of money to satisfy an importunate creditor, and get the money by doing extra work or by selling some of my possessions, my action is all right. If, in order to get the money, I commit a

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 155.

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robbery, my action is morally wrong. The motive, here, is the same in both cases, but the intention differs; and the act is judged by the intention, by the means adopted rather than by the end in view. The moral judgment refers sometimes to the motive and sometimes to the intention. The criterion we employ is: "What possible or probable effect, according to your knowledge, is your action going to have upon your fellows?" If the achievement of an end will cut across their rights, it must be abandoned; or if the end be allowable, care must be taken that the means employed do not interfere with the rights of those others. A great deal has been written about motive and intention; but, if we go to the commonsense use of the terms, we find that motive and intention are generally used as convertible terms. Even if we distinguish between them, meaning by 'intention' the proximate and by 'motive' the remote end, it is clear that the moral judgment refers exclusively to neither. Which it refers to will depend upon whether the motive or the intention touches the interests of our fellows most directly and seriously.

Turning to the question as to the relation of motive to effects (using 'motive' and 'intention' as equivalent terms), Green's general conclusion, we have said, is that the moral judgment refers to the motive rather than to the effects (paragraph 155). But, later on, he returns to the subject (paragraphs 212, 293-6 and 305-6), and attempts to answer the question how the motive is related to the actual effects. In paragraph 293 we are told that how we regard 293-6 the relation of effect to motive will depend upon our view of the moral end; and in paragraph 295 it is said that the separation of effects from motive is an abstraction made only by the finite mind. For an omniscient mind the distinction between good motive and good effect would not exist. An omniscient mind could trace the 'yellow streak' in any motive in the actual consequences, and the good or evil in the motive of an action is exactly measured by the good or evil in its actual consequences. If the 'best motives' sometimes lead to mischievous results, it is because those best motives have not been good enough. Thus, says Green (paragraph 294), we can agree with the Utilitarian



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that a man is judged morally by the actual effects of his action. In any case we can know only our own motives. As for others, we have to depend on what they tell us their motives were, or else infer their motives from their actions.

This must sound the very reverse of the view we have attributed to Green in the text. It is quite clear that he does express the view we have attributed to him, but it is also clear that, in the paragraphs we are now dealing with, he takes a different line.

The explanation of the apparent contradiction is to be found by reflecting on a passage in paragraph 293—"How we regard the relation of motive to effects will depend upon our view of the end." For, when Green tells us that the goodness of the motive and the goodness of the actual effects are exactly coincident, this is certainly true on his view that the end or object of the good will is the production of the good will itself. Whatever be the consequences for a man's own happiness or that of other persons, action from a good motive cannot possibly produce bad moral character in him or in anyone else. A bad motive cannot produce a good will, and a good motive cannot produce a bad will. So, at any rate, Green is prepared to argue. We are not here trying to defend his view of the relation of motive to actual effects, but are simply trying to explain how, taking the end to be the production of the good will itself, his view is intelligible. The good will being the effect to be produced, the very exercise of the good will must reveal itself in the actual exercise of good will.

But however much we may be able to explain these passages in Green, he does not and could not consistently hold to the view that the good or evil in the motive is exactly measured by the good or evil in the actual effects. In paragraph 295 he had said that, if the best motives sometimes lead to mischievous results, it is because these  
212 "best motives" have not been good enough. But in 212 he tells us that the most equitable intentions will not save a  
306 man from doing in ignorance something which has mischievous results; in 306 we are told that ignorance is not culpable in the sense in which evil intention is; and in 305

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Green says that, while a man cannot have been good 305 without doing what is good in result, still he may do what is good in result without being good. In these last few passages referred to, it seems clear that Green is wavering between (a) the view that the relevant 'good effects' are the effects which can be described as the production of a good will, and (b) the view that the relevant good effects are something other than the production of a good will. If we take the end as 'perfection,' we may put the point by saying that Green is wavering between the conception of perfection as = "the good will," and the conception of perfection as = "the development of all those capacities proper to human nature." So far as he thinks of the good will as having for its object the good will itself, Green naturally enough says that the moral judgment can be said to refer to motive or to actual effects, with equal propriety. So far as he escapes from this circle, he recognizes that the goodness of the motive and the goodness of the actual effects cannot be measured by each other, and he asserts the moral judgment to refer to motive rather than to actual effects.

I have tried to explain Green's statement that "the good in the effects and the good in the motive are exactly measurable by each other," by connecting it up with his doctrine of the good will as the object of the good will. A very interesting and much simpler explanation has been suggested in some unpublished notes by Dr. C. C. J. Webb. "That odd 'mystical' faith of Green's, that there is a failure or defect in every result of human action corresponding to a moral defect in the agent's motives, has always seemed to me to be a pure deduction from a general belief in the moral government of the world."

## NOTE E. SELF-REALIZATION AS THE MORAL END.<sup>1</sup>

To Green, more than to any other member of the Idealist school, belongs the honour of having kept in the forefront of ethics the conception of the individual person as an end-in-himself. With infinite patience he has worked this conception into touch with practical life; and, at the opening of his searching criticism of Utilitarianism, he pays special tribute to men like Bentham and Mill for the way in which they insisted upon it. This general principle is so woven into the texture of his whole ethical thought that nothing could prevent its being the chief directing force in determining the details of his moral theory.

There are, however, certain outcrops of another point of view which puzzle us when we come across them. In explaining and justifying the conception of society as a society of persons or ends-in-themselves, Green's 'explanation' is sometimes couched in language which, to many readers, seems to deny the very thing he is attempting to explain. Whilst the moral consciousness is, for him, the very reverse of egoistic, he sometimes describes it in fundamentally egoistic terms. It is well, then, that we should give prominence to this alien element in his thought, so that the reader will be able to recognize it for what it really is—namely an alien element—and then discount it when trying to appreciate Green's general position.

In accordance with his notion of society as a kingdom of ends, Green very naturally speaks of the moral end as perfection or full self-realization for all members of society. But "self-realization" sometimes bears a very different sense (and this especially when Green is dealing with the psychology of volition), a necessarily individualistic sense. Having said that the good will takes as its end the well-being of a society of persons, Green (paragraph 199) tries to fit this to his account of volition in general: We all act "under the form of the good." We all act to attain ends which we conceive as capable of satisfying a certain

<sup>1</sup> See page 117.

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interest or certain interests. Amongst the various interests which we possess are interests in other persons and their well-being, so that we can present *their* satisfaction or happiness as a good to *us*—as an end or object which satisfies some interest of ours.

Now all this is surely true. But Green proceeds to elaborate his statement in the following way: We have an interest in those other persons, he says, in the sense that, always acting for the satisfaction of our interests, we cannot contemplate ourselves as satisfied except so far as we can contemplate those others as satisfied also. Their satisfaction is included in the end for which a man lives, living, as he necessarily does, for himself (paragraph 200).

This idea that man "necessarily lives for himself" is more definitely expressed in the statement (paragraph 154) that self-satisfaction or self-realization is the ultimate motive in every voluntary act. "In all conduct to which moral predicates are applicable, a man is an object to himself." Any act of will ". . . is one in which a self-conscious individual directs himself to the realization of some idea as to an object in which for the time being he seeks self-satisfaction." Green thus speaks, at times, as if the *end* or *motive* in all action were self-realization in the sense of *self-satisfaction*; and that this is not an accurate statement of the facts will be clear if we consider his own more careful account of what a motive is. A motive is the idea of some state of things to be brought about by effort. The motive is the end or object—some such thing as the installation of a sanitary system in a town, the provision for a family, etc. So far as the end is attained, *self-satisfaction necessarily accompanies attainment*. But the self-satisfaction was not the motive; the motive was the sanitation of the town or the provision for the family.

So far as Green speaks of man as being always an object to himself in acting, so far as he speaks of the motive as self-realization in the sense of self-satisfaction, this conception of self-realization is quite different from that 'self-realization' which a person can seek for himself *and* for others—the self-realization which consists in the attainment of all those interests which he and they cherish.

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Self-realization in the second sense can very well be a motive to action. Self-realization in the first sense is not a motive at all; it is what we feel when an end or object has been achieved. The point of all this criticism is exactly the point which Green himself so successfully makes against the Psychological Hedonist. In aiming at an end we are not aiming at the pleasure which the realization of that end brings; though, if the end be attained, we do feel pleased. Similarly, we may say, as against Green, in aiming at an end one is not aiming at self-satisfaction. If the end be attained the self will feel satisfied; but this self-satisfaction was not the motive or the end aimed at.

We can reinforce this criticism by repeating against Green a further criticism he urged against Hedonism. If we say self-satisfaction is necessarily and always the ultimate motive, we must be thinking of the self-satisfaction which always accompanies achievement; and this self-satisfaction must always be a personal thing. We could never seek the self-satisfaction of another person as we seek our own. If to give another person self-satisfaction gives you satisfaction, and if *your* self-satisfaction is *always* your ultimate motive, then you are only aiming at his self-satisfaction because his being satisfied gives you self-satisfaction. Is there any essential difference between this and the Hedonistic theory that you try to please others because their being pleased gives you pleasure? In neither case are the other persons being treated as ends-in-themselves in the sense in which you are treating yourself as an end-in-yourself.

Green is quite right to insist that any interest of the self is an interest of the self; but an interest *of* the self is surely very different from an interest *in* the self. I certainly am the subject of all my interests; but is it in accordance with plain fact to suppose that I must necessarily be also the object of all my interests?

What Green is particularly anxious to maintain is that any 'end' must be a willed end. It must be a good *to me*, in the sense that, unless I want it to be achieved, any act of mine which brings it about is not a voluntary or morally imputable act. What he sometimes suggests, however,

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is that *what* I want is reducible, in the last resort, to some form of my own well-being. To say 'I will an end' is the same as saying 'that end is a good to me,' but it is not the same as saying 'that which is a good to me is my own well-being.' I am the subject of my ends, but my well-being is not necessarily the object or end of my will. To suppose that it is is to embrace the doctrine of egoism.

It is difficult to decide how far the conception of the well-being of 'the social self' (not 'the private self') as the object of the morally good will successfully meets the charge of egoism. It depends on what is meant by the social self. (1) Is the distinction between the 'social' and the 'private' self simply a distinction between the social and the private interests possessed by any individual person? If so, the charge of egoism is hardly met; for to say the satisfaction or realization of the social self is the moral end still confuses 'end or object aimed at' and 'subject of ends.' Or (2) does 'the social self' mean 'all individuals composing a society,' and 'the private self' 'any particular individual in that society'? This would successfully meet the charge of egoism. Or (3) is the 'social self' a unitary self wholly or partially immanent in, but not reducible to the individuals composing, a society? This, I think, would also meet the charge, provided the notion of a group or social mind be well-founded.

## NOTE F. THE END AS COMMON GOOD<sup>1</sup>

As he regards society as a society of persons, so Green asserts that the good will aims at realizing a common good. But the 'common good' may mean either of two things. (a) It may mean some unitary object for which all the members of society are co-operating; or (b) It may mean the good of all members, no matter in what direction the different members conceive their good to lie.

The question at issue here is whether the moral consciousness conceives the society in which it is to operate in terms of a *voluntary* association; or whether it conceives society in terms of a group of persons who *find* themselves in association, cherishing to some extent different interests. If we conceive the kingdom of ends in the first way, we shall probably think of the common good in the first sense. If we conceive the kingdom of ends in the second way, we shall probably think of the common good in the second sense. To illustrate:

(a) Suppose I am interested in preserving places of historical interest; I come across other individuals interested in the same object, and realizing that unity and co-operation make for strength, we form a "society for the preservation of historical monuments." In this case, our common good is a unitary good, it is a unitary object of interest to each and all.

(b) Let us, on the other hand, think of the back-yard of a tenement house where a number of persons are collected together, not all interested in the same thing. There are some small boys playing football, a washerwoman is hanging out her washing, a man is sitting in a sunny corner trying to read, the dustman is in to collect the rubbish from the ash-bins. In a real sense it is possible to speak of there being a 'common good' for all those persons; but it is not a unitary good. To act for the common good will mean the boys' confining their game to a part of the yard so as not to interfere with the work of the washerwoman or the reading of the bookish gentleman, and so on. The

<sup>1</sup> See pages 123 and 146.

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common good will be served by each person pursuing the 'good' he desires, with the least possible interference to a like pursuit on the part of others.

Now Green often speaks as if the common good at which the good will aims is primarily a common good in the first sense, whereas the truer view seems to me to be that it is primarily a common good in the second sense. It is, of course, perfectly true that there could be little social intercourse or progress of civilization unless the members of society had many interests in common. There would be no universities or football clubs, none of those amenities which give so much of its colour to human existence. There must be, in any really healthy society, a large number of unitary common goods, as is obvious from the number of voluntary associations which exist. But the question is whether it is common good in this first sense which is the *primary* idea underlying the conception of a system of mutual rights and duties. I do not think it is. In my view, the primary conception of common good for the moral consciousness is common good in the second sense—namely, in the sense of securing for every individual as much opportunity as is compatible with like opportunity for others for pursuing those interests which he cherishes, the interests of all not being necessarily the same.

It was probably with some such idea in mind that Bentham stressed the sameness of quality in all pleasures, the question of quantity being the only relevant one to his mind—push-pin is as good as poetry. This does not mean that every intelligent person will feel as much pleasure from push-pin as from poetry, or from poetry as from push-pin. It means that, in considering a person's right to do what he wishes to do, it is none of your business what he finds his happiness in, so long as the opportunities he is granted for pursuing it are balanced by like opportunities for others.

As against this, which I consider the truer view, we have the view of Green. Suppose (we may put the question) others do in fact cherish the same fundamental interest as I do, ought I to aid them (or at least not obstruct them) in the pursuit of this interest because it is *their interest*, or



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because *they are interested in the same thing as I am?* Green often (e.g., paragraphs 233-6), if not always, supposes it is for the second reason; I would suggest that the first is the true reason.

There can be no question that Green is right in holding that everything which makes social life itself desirable, and (almost without qualification) all the great achievements of the human race, depend on the existence of common interests and on co-operation for "unitary common goods." But the fact of moral and political *obligation* arises from the possibility of conflicting interests, and the conception of a "common good" as a balanced order of rights. Rights guarantee to individuals some freedom to live in accordance with their own personal interests, irrespective of what those interests are, so long as they are not, in their very nature, incapable of being included within such an order.

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(*Robert Elsmere*, by Mrs. Humphry Ward. Green is the original of the character, "Mr. Grey," in this novel.)

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